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A BRIDE ELECT.

CHAPTER VII.

"I HAD such a delightful travelling companion this afternoon," said Lady Sudeleigh to the table collectively, after Gregory had said grace and I had begun to ladle out the soup. "He got out at Lynnechester, and I understand he is a neighbour of yours, a Mr. Redworth."

"Our nearest neighbour," exclaimed Gregory. "Just across the way, in fact, at Coldhope."

"Well, I am deeply indebted to him, I can assure you; and perhaps I shall have the opportunity of thanking him again while I am here. Mathilde made some stupid mistake about the luggage at the junction, and we thought it had gone on in the wrong train. She is absolutely no use in travelling; as much charge, I tell her, as a child would be; and these north-country porters don't understand her broken English. I do not know what would have become of us if Mr. Redworth had not come to the rescue, really like a knight-errant succouring the distressed. After that he went on in my carriage to Lynnechester, and told me all sorts of odd things; I was greatly entertained."

"He is a very out-of-the-way person, and can make himself uncommonly interesting when he chooses. There

could be no doubt he would choose with you; and I am glad he was at hand to be of use."

"He did choose; but I took it for nature and not compliment. My only misgiving was whether he could be perfectly sane. It is, to say the least, unusual for a man in this nineteenth century of ours,—a man who bears the stamp of good society—to declare himself an alchemist! And he would not allow he was in jest; he insisted it was a serious science, and only the Arabian term for something of real practical import to all of us."

"I believe he is a clever experimental chemist, and, according to his own account, he has discovered some remarkable secrets in the ancient mystical literature, the writings of Paracelsus, and others even earlier. He told me on one occasion here that he was on the eve of giving them to the world."

"The philosopher's stone, I suppose, and the fountain of eternal youth. I should not mind having a dip in that fountain if he can produce it. The world has been a pleasant one to me in past years, and I am in no hurry to leave it, even now. Seriously, however, it does seem odd for a man like Mr. Redworth to give himself up to such researches. The craze must come in somewhere. Yes, he

talked about Paracelsus, and the impossibility of fathoming the true significance of those ancient writings without the fundamental key; otherwise they appeared the wildest nonsense, all about green dragons and salt of vipers and such like. As I told him, I could well believe it."

"For my own part," said Gregory, "I think it not impossible that the manuscripts were so phrased as to be intelligible only to a certain sect. There was a great idea in those days of keeping the laity in ignorance; and though our modern practice has got past all that, there was an element of wisdom in it, to my thinking. Nothing is so dangerous as a little knowledge in the power of the ignorant."

"Ah, when a clergyman begins to talk about the laity as a class by themselves, we can say nothing, we women. Can we, Miss Varney? But I thought my charming friend a little peculiar on other points. What do you think he told me he had got with him, in a particular long wooden box of which he was very careful?"

"I have not the least idea."

"I hope I shall not spoil any one's dinner if I tell you; it was a human arm. It seems he attaches a great value to such trifles on account of experiments he is pursuing; and having heard from the hospital authorities in York that an amputation was to take place, he attended to possess himself of the,—*memento mori* is not a right expression, I suppose, as they did not kill the man."

I said I understood from Mr. Redworth he was studying the Egyptian methods of embalming.

"It was not the Egyptian way he was explaining to me,—at least not what we have always understood by it, we ignorant folk who are not alchemists. The Egyptians used to rub you with spices, did they not, and wind you in waxed cloths, and paint a picture

of you on the mummy-case? I saw some queer specimens when I was at Cairo with Sir Richard. But Mr. Redworth's way, the alchemist's way, is something very superior. It is the injection of a fluid into the veins which arrests the change of death; and if he is able to perfect the invention the body can be rendered absolutely indestructible except by fire. Curious idea, is it not?"

"I have heard Redworth talk about it," returned Gregory; "but he said he had not mastered the secret of complete diffusion. It needed the pulse of a living heart to circulate the fluid equally throughout the system. All he has accomplished yet has been temporary and partial."

"Yes; he was abusing the Government because they would not give him a criminal! Horrid idea, is it not? And we are making Miss Varney and your niece look quite pale over it. I shall ask him when I see him how his arm is getting on. He told me he attended the operation, and injected this stuff the instant it was severed. But enough of Mr. Redworth; tell me something about your church. Have you obtained the grant of funds you hoped for?"

Lady Sudeleigh had talked on about our neighbour as if really interested, but I believe it was in part to cover the sad contrast between our present gathering round that table and what had been hoped for. She was one of those people who think the best way to treat a sorrow is to ignore it, and her ideal of consolation was oblivion. I have no doubt Barbara's disappearance was often a topic of conversation between her and Eleanor, but I am quite sure it was always on Eleanor's introduction. She was less reticent with me, but I never heard her approach the subject with Gregory, except on one occasion which I shall note hereafter. That first evening

when he said something about "our lost child" I saw her put out her thin hand sparkling with rings, and lay it on his with a momentary pressure while she turned away her face; so though silent, she could be sympathetic. I liked her; I confess that she fascinated me.

There was another whom she attracted, but the spell was of other weaving than her own. Janie never put herself forward into notice, but was ready with numberless little mute attentions, quick to anticipate every wish of Dick's mother. The great lady did not heed her much; she had been accustomed to take her at Eleanor's valuation as "only Janie Moorhouse," and I am sure she was quite unsuspecting of any warmer feeling towards her son. Dick came the day following her arrival,—or Richard, as his mother called him, for she never descended to diminutives; and I did not wonder the Sudeleighs were anxious about him. He looked haggard and gloomy; irritable as much as the instinct of good manners suffered to be apparent; restless under his grief, and yet reluctant to be out of touch with the associations that revived it. I was present when he knelt beside Eleanor's sofa for her farewell words.

"I will not go unless you send me," he said. "If there is anything we have left undone, anything I can still do, tell me and I will stay."

But the other mother was looking on, and Eleanor said "Go" amidst her tears. He remained a night at the Rectory, and I was witness to one other little scene at which Lady Sudeleigh did not assist. I was sitting in the dusk over the fire, and he and Janie were withdrawn into the window recess, the two young heads near together in the dim light; he had a paper he was unfolding to show her. "Here it is; this is the list of the

ports at which we shall touch, and the dates for letters; you will not let me look in vain for them, I know. Janie, you have been as good as an angel to me in my trouble; it will be heavier on me than ever when I cannot bring it for you to share. Promise to write to me, to write by every mail, and tell me any least thing. The faintest hope or trace will bring me back."

"I will write,—I will indeed." Her reply was so faint it hardly reached my ear, but he caught her hand and wrung it. I thought for a moment he intended a warmer caress. "God bless you," he said huskily, "my dear little sister."

I wondered as I listened whether it would always be a sister's love he would ask from her; and then, with the old haunting suggestion which my better reason refused, but which I could not wholly quell,—whether if another affection were demanded she would be guiltless in according it,—whether the hand that lay in his were indeed free from stain!

He left early the next day; and as it happened Lady Sudeleigh and I were alone over our tea that afternoon, and the hour, or the function, or the fact that she had that morning parted with her youngest and favourite child for an indefinite absence, may have predisposed her to confidence. Eleanor was sleeping off her agitation, and the effect of a suffering night; Gregory had been called to his sick parishioner, and had sent Janie abroad on another errand.

"I am more relieved than I can say that Richard is gone! You won't misunderstand me, Miss Varney, for I feel I can speak freely to you; but it is a great weight off my mind."

I said something sympathetic about his altered looks, and the benefit of change.

"Yes, the change will be every-

thing; and youth, you know, youth forgets so soon. And in such a case as this it is much to be desired. I am afraid my dear friends here would feel it, but nothing would please me better than for him to find some nice girl,—desirable from every point of view, of course—who would console him for all he has gone through."

The scene of the day before involuntarily rose before me, and the two young heads outlined against the twilight; but it was not of Janie Moorhouse that the mother was thinking.

"I was very fond of Barbara. Sir Richard and I were quite satisfied with our son's choice, and pleased to receive her as a daughter. But, sorry as I am for the Alleynes, I cannot think of this affair quite as they do. Her father seems so confident she is dead,—Eleanor that she has been trapped away from them and is held in some kind of impossible durance; and even if I could, I would not argue against their convictions. But, Miss Varney, surely you do not agree with them in either view?"

"I do not know what to think. I am quite at a loss."

"Mr. Alleyne is annoyed at the opinion the police have formed about it; but only consider probability. Is it likely any one would have any motive for detaining her against her will? That is what I feel so strongly,—the absence of conceivable motive in either case. No, you may depend upon it she went away voluntarily. It is quite true there may have been no settled intention beforehand to throw over my son, and inflict such a blow upon her parents; but my conviction is she met some one that night,—possibly by connivance of one of the household, I cannot say—and was persuaded to take the fatal step of quitting her home."

"We have felt that to be unlikely, knowing her; for my part, on the testi-

mony of those who knew her well. Besides, there was no lover."

The little woman of the world shook her head as she warmed her dainty feet on the fender. She found Ditchborough cold, and had muffled herself in a soft fleecy wrap which breathed the same odour of sandal-wood as all her other possessions. "My dear Miss Varney, there is always a lover when a girl is as attractive as Barbara. And has it not occurred to you that the cousin may be in the secret? The two were brought up together, and would naturally be intimate. Do not you think Janet Moorhouse might throw some light on the mystery if she would?"

Janie again, and from a different quarter this time! I replied that I could not think so; I had heard her questioned, and her distress and perplexity seemed to equal ours.

Lady Sudeleigh shook her head again, but did not press the point. "And as for Mr. Alleyne's conviction she is dead, I see no evidence for it whatever. The very sending back of the clothes is to me a proof she is alive, and there had been no violence. There is an old saying 'murder will out'; surely such a search as has been made would by now have discovered the body or traces of it. I feel confident she is alive. And what would be more terrible than all for my poor friends,—and for Richard—would be her return with the blemished reputation of such an escapade. It is dreadful to say it, but that is my chief fear." I looked at her as she sat erect, cup in hand, slowly stirring in an added lump of sugar, a little Rhadamanthus of virtue; the easiest chair never offered any temptation to her to lounge. "Eleanor tells me," she went on presently, "that Mr. Alleyne's belief is mainly founded on having seen an apparition. Of course we can allow a great deal for excited

feeling at such a time, but I had thought him a different man."

"That was very much my own view: it was a surprise to me to find Gregory so impressed; but there certainly was the apparition. I witnessed it myself, and so did one of the servants; but I should be glad to think it all hallucination. I am not used to put faith in such matters."

"Excited feeling in all three cases, no doubt; the result of the shock you had experienced, and the strained expectancy of those first days. I have always set my face against this depraved craze for dreaming dreams and seeing visions,—Psychical Research unearthing what should be relegated to a moral dustheap, as was the wiser practice of my youth. We know there are no such things as ghosts, so how is it possible to see them?"

I remembered Mr. Redworth and his theory of the thought-body; but I was not going to argue with the little dame, who glanced at me with an air of triumphant Sadduceism, as if her fiat had routed into Nirvāna a whole army of phantoms. She was on my own side of the argument, but somehow it did not sound so convincing from her extreme point of view as when it floated unformulated in my own mind. As I turned to the tea-tray I could not help a glance down the room, empty now, but for ever associated with my memory of that deceptive simulacrum,—that shadow of Barbara in bridal white, which had moved away from our appeal. But I was spared the necessity of replying, as the hall-door opened and shut, and I heard another footstep and voice accompanying Gregory's. There was the pause of throwing off over-coats and suchlike winter trappings, and then my cousin entered ushering in Mr. Redworth.

"I have brought Redworth for a

cup of your tea, Susan; and he has consented to stay and dine with us. Redworth, you and Lady Sudeleigh are already acquainted."

"On my own introduction only," said the mellow voice with which I had become familiar. "I shall get you, Alleyne, to present me formally."

Lady Sudeleigh had brightened up at once with the appearance of the gentlemen—a survival of youth there also!—and shaken off all the severity with which she was contemplating Psychical Research. No indeed, she said, no presentation of Mr. Redworth was necessary; she had a most grateful recollection of all he had done for her, and was charmed to have the opportunity of again expressing her thanks.

So he drew into the circle at the fire; and some lively conversation followed in which I was chiefly a listener, and so had leisure for observation. I thought Mr. Redworth had altered in the fortnight or so since I had seen him; there was a shade of depression about him when silent, and the melancholy softness of his dark eyes was sadder and gentler than ever, perhaps in contrast with the black vivacity of Lady Sudeleigh's. She had plenty to say on all kinds of subjects, and he was readier to meet her on her own ground than we were, being more used to the world in which she had moved. He amused her, in short, and was evidently a welcome addition to our rather melancholy circle. I liked him also, and I am sure to Gregory it was a boon that he should contribute to the entertainment of the guest. There was however one person who, if I mistake not, would have preferred his absence, and that was Janie. She did not make her appearance till the announcement of dinner, and then her greeting of Mr. Redworth was silent and formal, and she only once addressed him in the

course of the evening. I noticed too that she ate hardly anything, as if, ridiculous as it may seem, the discomfort of his neighbourhood deprived her of appetite. I caught him once or twice regarding her curiously, and with something of the look I had once before surprised from him. It surely could not have hurt his vanity that out of his small audience of four, one listener should be unsympathetic; the rest of us were readily interested or amused, and the conversational shuttlecock was tossed gaily to and fro between him and Lady Sudeleigh. He was not, it seemed, content to be only alchemist and mystic; to-night it was the frequenter of London clubs and drawing-rooms, the cynical observer and wit who was posing before us; but always in the rare silences the shadow settled back upon his face.

Lady Sudeleigh, as I said, was well amused; and it was not till after the gentlemen joined us in the drawing-room that she remembered to challenge him about the arm. She did so with a graceful affectation of horror, and tapped his sleeve with her fan assuring him that he was "quite uncanny."

"It is unchanged at present: the journey did not disturb the process; but whether I have succeeded time alone will show. There lies the test. I may flatter myself for weeks, months perhaps, that I have triumphed over the Destroyer; but in my results hitherto he has been victor and not I."

"But I thought you had made some successes," put in Gregory.

"Perfect successes with animals; and I doubt not I could succeed as entirely with humanity provided I could induce death in my own way. It is in the post-mortem application I am inexpert. If you have any pet animals that you wish to preserve, Lady Sudeleigh, let me have them

when the time comes and I will give them their quietus."

"I am not a lover of pets like some people; but, if I were, I should hesitate to send them to suffer strange things in their old age."

"They would not suffer. I am no vivisector, I assure you. I dislike pain myself, and would hesitate to inflict it on another,—physical pain, that is—even by way of reprisal." The last words he added thoughtfully, and with that odd trick of stroking the upper lip which somewhat disguised his expression. "My victims, as you may call them,—and I have a whole Bluebeard's closet of them in fur and feathers—have not suffered a single pang. I overcome alarm with an anæsthetic, and use the injecting-needle as with morphia; in some cases administering an internal dose in addition. They never recover consciousness, but sleep themselves away in about twelve hours. I have never witnessed suffering. I wish you would come and see them, and the arm. My human specimens are not numerous, being difficult to come by. I had a terrible disappointment when I was in France; did I ever tell you, Alleyne? I obtained a head from the guillotine; the head of a young man who had been convicted of something quite abnormal in the way of crime, and who showed a revolting cowardice at the last, so I was told; I was not an eye-witness. Well, I had the head within an hour or less, and to all appearance the injection was absolutely successful. You should have seen that face,—the beatified expression on it after I had operated; no saint or martyr could have excelled it; it lacked only the aureole. It remained beatified for seventeen weeks, and then my failure was apparent. Limbs have remained unchanged for longer periods. All this is very horrid, is it not, Miss Moorhouse?" I do

not know why he addressed Janie, for she was not looking at him even, but had her eyes resolutely bent on her work. She did not reply; perhaps he did not expect an answer, for he hardly paused for one, and said, turning to Gregory: "Even if Lady Sudeleigh does not care to see my specimens [she had protested in dumb show when it was proposed], I have many things at Coldhope which would be of interest to her and to Miss Varney, and the house itself is considered worth a visit. Do me a favour, Alleyne. Lunch with me to-morrow at any hour you like to name, and persuade the ladies to accompany you. I would include Miss Moorhouse, but perhaps you would not all care to leave Mrs. Alleyne?"

He was looking directly at her, with again that peculiarity of regard. This time she raised her head and met it full. "Thank you," she said, "you are right: I will not leave Mrs. Alleyne."

No one took any notice of this brief passage. Lady Sudeleigh would be enchanted, she said, to see Coldhope, if Mr. Redworth would promise,—really promise—not to introduce her to any of his horrors; and as for myself, I was willing enough to accompany her, provided the proposal pleased Gregory. It had been impossible hitherto to persuade him to go anywhere since our loss; but doubtless he did not wish to refuse so near a friend and neighbour, and he consented easily, rather to my surprise. Mr. Redworth professed himself highly honoured, and bowing low to Lady Sudeleigh pledged his word that all his horrors should be under lock and key.

"And this great invention," she went on, "when are you going to startle the world with it? When will it be ripe for disclosure?"

"I cannot call it an invention; it is the revival of an old method, and

has been practised, by injection of the carotid artery, in modern times, but not with the results I hope to attain. You ask when it will be ready for disclosure,"—he looked down meditatively as if considering; "possibly in about forty years."

She gave a laughing exclamation. "I need not excite myself about it then. At sixty-five I take little interest in what is in store for the world forty years ahead. The others may perhaps hope to see you set the Thames on fire, but not I."

He smiled, drawing up his fine head and squaring his chest. "Then the expectation is stranger still in my case, as I am your senior. I have counted the threescore years and ten that is supposed to be the allotted span of life."

She looked up at him with genuine astonishment, no counterfeit of it in compliment; and it was true he looked as young as many men of fifty. "I was joking the other day about the fountain of youth, but you must have found it in good earnest. My dear Mr. Redworth, you are more wonderful than ever!"

His smile deepened and then faded, and the shadow succeeded it as he answered, "Not that; I profess nothing of the kind. Had I made such a discovery I should hardly withhold it from my friends. But there are certain ascetic rules given by the old mystics, certain methods of revitalisation, which do tend to prolong life. I feel myself a younger man than I did ten years ago, and my expectation of life indefinitely increased, apart from disease or accident. But I am beginning to wonder if the game is worth the candle after all."

From this the conversation turned to other matters; but later on, when Lady Sudeleigh was engaged in a lively argument with Gregory, and Janie had left the room, he came to

sit by me, saying in a low voice: "Has there been any further appearance here that you could recognise?" I replied in the negative, speaking in the same subdued key, and he went on: "I am interested, more deeply than you can know, and with greater faith than you accord, you, the eyewitness. I begin to think that after all is the crux,—the perception beyond; that I have been mistaken in all my groping on this plane. To those who study as I do, there comes a point of advance where the two ways diverge. I have attained it, and I hesitate which to follow. That would decide me [he breathed the last words almost in a whisper] if I could know for certain the *via celestica*, the upward way, would lead me to her!"

Next day dawned cold with keen March wind and crisp with March frost, but bright and fair. Eleanor was interested in our proposed visit and quite willing for us to leave her; her prejudice against Mr. Redworth appeared to be dying out; perhaps, indeed, she had only disliked him as a suitor for Barbara. She was sitting up on her sofa when we went in for a word of adieu, and seemed in more equable spirits than the day before; possibly it was really a relief to her that the dreaded farewell to Dick was no longer in anticipation. Lady Sudeleigh whispered a word to her, and I gathered it was about my appearance. "Yes," returned Eleanor, "other people have noticed the likeness. There is a certain family resemblance, no doubt; Gregory sees it more plainly than I do."

As we went away down stairs our guest said: "Forgive the personal remark, but I confess I was surprised by your likeness to poor Barbara. I thought you resembled her the first evening I came,—in figure and air perhaps more than face; but just now

it was really remarkable. It may be the way you are dressed; but it struck me irresistibly."

There was nothing particular about the dress; a close-fitting jacket of winter cloth, and a hat and veil, such as might equally have been worn by my years or Barbara's without peculiarity on her side or an aping of youth on mine. No doubt the lace veil concealed my lack of complexion and may have helped the illusion; but I only note the incident because of something which happened later.

The brougham had been ordered to take us up to Coldhope early, as we were to see the gardens and hot-houses before lunch; Gregory following on foot after getting through his morning hours of literary work. The coachman proved unpunctual as usual; and as Lady Sudeleigh was afraid of waiting indoors in her heavy furs, I suggested we should walk to the churchyard, as she had expressed a wish to see a certain tombstone, curious on account of its grotesque carving and epitaph, which had been spoken of the night before. We went in through the private wicket from the garden; and while my companion inspected the tomb with interest through her long-handled eyeglass, my attention was caught by a disturbance in the road,—angry voices in altercation, then blows and a child's scream. The churchyard sloped upward, so by moving further along the path I saw what was happening,—a big boy belabouring a smaller one, who cried out dismally under the chastisement. I called to him to desist, but other intervention proved nearer at hand than mine. Janie was passing in the road, and I saw her seize the big hulking lad by the collar, and catch at the descending stick, at some risk to herself preventing a further blow.

"For shame, Phil Dempster! To strike a boy who is a cripple, and not

half your size! Let him go at once."

It was surprise at the unexpected attack, and no instinct of obedience, which made the aggressor slacken his grasp, so that the victim,—a pale hunchbacked child who was one of our singers—was able to twist from under it and effect his escape. The big lad turned furiously upon Janie, and I hastened towards them afraid he was going to attack her; but the weapon employed was not physical.

"Yo leave me alone," he said; "yo've no call to go meddlin' for all yo be t' passon's niece. Folks say it's in prison yo'd be this minute of the law had its way. Where's t' passon's daughter?"

She recoiled as if from an actual blow, and the rough fellow went swaggering down the road with his hands in his pockets. Lady Sudeleigh had followed in time to hear the last words; but the north-country dialect, which I have attempted feebly to indicate, was fortunately not intelligible. "What did the fellow say? He wants a good thrashing himself to teach him manners. I shall speak to your uncle, or to Mr. Redworth."

Janie was white as death; she gave me an imploring look, but seemed beyond speech for the moment. I put in a word to give her time to recover. "I don't think Mr. Redworth could interfere; you see, he is only the tenant. Does Mr. Alleyne know the boy, Janie? Is he a parishioner?"

"He lives in the parish," she managed to answer; "but he does not belong to uncle's church. His family are Roman Catholics; they are generally friendly and civil. I do not want the boy complained of for any rudeness to me."

The carriage came up behind us and made a diversion. As Lady Sudeleigh got in, Janie held me back for a moment. "Don't let anything be

said," she whispered; "I could not bear it." And the last thing I saw was her pale face looking entreatingly at me as we drove away.

CHAPTER VIII.

LADY SUDELEIGH did not again allude to Dempster's insolence; the chief remaining impression seemed to be what I had said of Mr. Redworth. She had believed him the proprietor of Coldhope, and as we drove in at the lodge-gates and more slowly up the long rise of the park, I explained who were the real owners of the place, and why they had gone into exile.

"It is a sad thing, a sad thing," she said, "when the extravagances of a former generation pull down an old family from the position it ought to occupy. It must have been heart-breaking to go away and leave all this to strangers. I know how I should feel if we had to give up Leigh Hall, or if Maxwell could not afford to keep it up after us when we are gone. Thank heaven there is no fear of that; my only trouble is that he will not marry."

Maxwell was the Sudeleighs' heir, now abroad with his regiment; a brother so much Dick's senior as to have obtained his commission when the younger son had hardly emerged from his cradle. Lady Sudeleigh's grievance that she had no daughter-in-law was one frequently ventilated; and I think it was on this account that Dick's early marriage had been so warmly approved. She did not bemoan herself further on this occasion, as the carriage soon entered the inner gate and drew up at the door of Coldhope, which was hospitably set open, with Mr. Redworth bareheaded on the steps to receive us.

We employed the interval before luncheon in going over the gardens. They were not beautiful in their

winter aspect, but curious with close-cropped holly hedges and privet monsters, stone borders and sundials, and the basin of a fountain in front of the terrace centred by a melancholy-looking Triton blowing a conch. Mr. Redworth told us the house had originally been balanced with another wing, and that the terraced walk was built upon the ruins. It was destroyed by fire some sixty years since, and the Beryngtons had been too poor to rebuild it, possibly finding the reduced size of the mansion better suited to their means. "And it is of course far larger than I can use," he said; "but I needed the retirement and space for my experiments,—including the Bluebeard's closet I am not to show to Lady Sudeleigh. Coldhope has suited me well, and I have no present intention of leaving it."

The ornamental garden was not large; it only surrounded the raised terrace, and filled the centre of the original three-sided front. The other side of the existing wing looked on to the wilder park and woods. Mr. Redworth told us that the high windows facing this way were in the library which we should presently see from within; and the wing had, I noticed, a private entrance from the park; we passed it on our way to the walled gardens which lay behind the house under the shelter of the hill, with range upon range of glass forcing-houses. "I have nothing to do with this," he said, "except to purchase my supplies. The Beryngtons lease it to a man who farms the place for the market; and very well he does it, I understand, though I have sometimes to grumble at his charges."

It was pleasant to make the tour of that bit of the tropics planted down so oddly in chilly Ditchborough; warm-breathing, flower-scented places,

some of them filled with rare beauty delighting the eye, for flowers and ferns were cultivated as well as the early fruits. The March wind felt doubly bitter as we emerged at the end of our pilgrimage; and I think the danger of it struck Mr. Redworth, for he said hastily: "I must not keep you out in this keen air. Come back into the house the shortest way."

The shortest way was back to the postern that adjoined the library, and led through a small ante-chamber into the spacious room, warm with a glowing wood-fire burning on the open hearth. Lady Sudeleigh gave a sigh of satisfaction as she sat rigidly upright in an easy chair, and undid her furs from her throat, while we both looked round with interest. And indeed there was much to interest; pictures set on easels, portfolios of photographs and sketches, tables strewn with curios and antiques, precious manuscripts under glass cases. The walls round the room and on one side between the windows were lined with books, both in closed cases and open shelves, while a light inner gallery and staircase communicated with the floor above. Mr. Redworth explained that the majority of the books belonged to the house, and were of little interest to him, though doubtless valuable. "Mine are in these cases," he said, indicating those to right and left of the fire. "I have ousted the lawful denizens in their favour, and banished them to boxes up stairs. Probably the hair of the worthy Beryngtons would stand erect did they know what heterodox literature they were harbouring; though naturally that would follow as a matter of course when they accepted your humble servant as a tenant. This is where I sit chiefly, where I read and study; my laboratory is overhead; I will take you through it after luncheon, and you

shall see the suite of reception-rooms. I ordered fires there to-day in your honour, but I never use them, as you may suppose. This room and another for meals are all I need when here."

We were intent on a portfolio of sketches, the record of an Italian tour, when Gregory arrived; and directly afterwards the luncheon was announced by Mr. Redworth's Hindu servant, who wore his native turban, and was altogether a singular figure to meet with in an English country house. He waited upon us very deftly at table, and in complete silence; and I must say that all the appointments were as well ordered as if our friend had commanded an entire staff of butler and subordinates. One thing at least he must have possessed, and that was a genius for a cook. Whatever may have been the ascetic rules he was accustomed to practice, he did not enforce them on his guests, nor observe them himself on this occasion, except by abstaining from the wines which were offered us, and contenting himself with water.

Afterwards we made the tour of the house, and commented on the ugliness of the Beryngton family-portraits. I understand that the collection of pictures had once been a fine one; but pressure of circumstances had weeded out all those of value, and there remained, to my mind, nothing that would compare with the three, or four modern landscapes in the library which were Mr. Redworth's property. There was some good oak carving, a mantel-piece by Gibbons in the dining-room; and hanging in the centre of the faded drawing-room, which breathed an unmistakable air of disuse, was a very handsome Venetian chandelier. When we returned to the library our host asked if we would care to go up to the

laboratory while Nursoo got coffee ready; so we ascended the inner stair, Lady Sudeleigh protesting all the way that she felt sure the Bluebeard's closet was in store for her after all.

The laboratory was a long bare room lighted with several windows which closed with barred shutters. It contained an electric battery, a lathe, a forge, a number of retorts and queerly shaped vessels, bottles on shelves against the wall, and two or three oak presses; while at one end a lamp was burning although broad daylight. A chair or two and some uncovered tables, one of them topped with gray marble, completed the furniture. Mr. Redworth picked up one or two of the appliances and gave us a little lecture on their use; then he took from a shelf a piece of carving on which he was engaged.

"I amuse myself," he said, "in this way, or with painting, in the intervals of my work. I am a handicraftsman for recreation, an experimenter for labour." We admired, as was natural, and the free design in bold relief was really well executed; but he disclaimed any praise. "This is only a rough affair; I have succeeded better in a different style, as you will see if you come into the studio." He opened a door at the further end of the room, and showed us into another smaller apartment which was richly carpeted with Indian work and had windows to the east and north. A painter's easel was set up in the north window, and a number of canvases stood in the corner beyond it, turned against the wall. The window to the east was occupied by a kind of shrine, which blocked out all the lower light, and was elaborately carved in dark wood looking more like ebony than oak. The large lower panel, which we had been brought to see, filled the whole width of the window recess and

was fully a yard high, a complicated figure-subject with foliated border. Above this rose the altar, and set in the centre upon it was a very striking and beautiful picture, the head of a dead Christ. I heard Mr. Redworth tell Gregory it was a copy only of an old master, but an especially fine one. The frame was of wrought metal surmounted by a representation of the crown of thorns; and above it stood a large crucifix in bronze, the arms of the cross in relief against the upper part of the unscreened window and gray sky. Two large candelabra were placed on either side; and below the picture in a chafing-dish burned a peculiar kind of aromatic incense, which rose before it in thin spirals of bluish smoke.

"This is my oratory," Mr. Redworth had said as we entered; and in front of the altar there was indeed the kind of chair which is called a *prie-dieu*, the only one in the room. I confess to have been so surprised by the whole thing that I had not a word to say, while the others were examining the elaborate carving, and Gregory was so much attracted by the picture that he went back to look at it again and again. It was truly fine, the head noble, the expression ideal; but for my own part, I have no great fancy for pictures of death. Seeing that I stood silent, Mr. Redworth turned to me and asked my opinion. I had to rouse myself to answer him. "It is very beautiful,—and very unexpected. I admire it all, both the carving and the picture; but somehow I feel oppressed by it. I don't know why,—and hardly what I am saying."

"You are looking pale, and perhaps it is the vapour. Many people are affected by strong scents. We will go back to the library."

Before leaving the room he took a small canvas from the pile against the wall and carried it with him, not

showing us what he held till we had descended to the lower room. Then he spoke to Gregory. "I have heard you say Mrs. Alleyne lamented having no portrait of your daughter Barbara. This is only a sketch, an impression; but if you think she would care for it, pray take it. I believe there is a certain likeness."

He set up the canvas in the light. It was, as he said, a sketch only, not a finished painting; but for pictorial effect it would have struck even a casual observer as clever and remarkable. And there was a likeness, it is true, but it was at once Barbara and not Barbara,—Barbara as I had never seen her; the familiar features faithfully delineated, but the expression curiously exalted, ecstatic, unnatural, idealised into a higher type of beauty at the sacrifice of her peculiar charm. This was not the girl who had been wayward and imperious at home, self-centred, as is so often the way with marked personalities, but at the same time the light and cheer of that home and the delight of our eyes. I could not say all this, or that a simpler presentation of her would have pleased me more. The beautiful head was relieved against a suggestion of rose-flushed sky,—sunrise or sunset—and these tints were repeated in a diadem of opals which crowned the waves of her dark hair. A white gauze scarf, or veil, was twisted round the head and indicated as draping the outline of shoulder and bust. The face and the gems were highly finished, but all else was vague.

"Eleanor will be very grateful to you for this," said Gregory, and he seemed much affected. "It is true we have no picture of our child; photographs never expressed her, and had not been attempted latterly. I always meant to have her portrait painted, but postponed it as one does such undertakings. Still I feel we

ought not to rob you—" He stopped, finding it difficult to express a suggestion that the picture might have a special value to the giver.

"If you like to take it I am well repaid," Mr. Redworth answered. "I have other studies, or I confess to you I should have been too selfish to part with it. I will have it placed in the carriage."

And laying it aside he began to talk to Lady Sudeleigh about portrait-painting, a subject on which she was fluent; while Gregory lifted the little canvas and took it over to the window for fuller examination. I sat still, endeavouring to combat an odd sensation of giddiness which came over me first in the oratory, induced doubtless by the burning scent, and affecting to occupy myself by examining the objects on a low table at my elbow. One of them did excite my curiosity; it was a large irregular-shaped crystal with polished surface, convex though not spherical, fastened by means of a silver rim upright on a stand of black wood. I was looking at this thing and trying to divine its use, when, in a way I can neither describe nor comprehend, the giddy swimming in my head seemed to be transferred to the interior of the crystal, and I saw it full of cloud and movement like the thin eddies of blue smoke and heated air which had risen up between me and the picture of the dead Christ. I do not think I could have looked away if I had tried; I was fascinated,—my eyes riveted,—I could not move. How long this stage lasted I cannot say; one cannot time the duration of such experiences by the seconds of the clock. I only know that as I gazed the whirling cloud became whiter and denser; and then all at once it parted and I saw — The face was Barbara's; but not a duplicate of Mr. Redworth's travesty of her so lately shown to us,—a mere

impression on the retina which was thus externalised. It was Barbara's living face as I had seen it in her home, vivid and mundane, with an expression quite other than the rapt serenity of her portrait. The lips moved; she seemed to be eagerly speaking, while the eyes looked full at me, anxious, excited, appealing. For how many heart-beats was it before the giddy whirling in the crystal eddied round it,—in front of it,—covering it? I gave a cry or gasp, something that attracted attention; and without losing consciousness,—that I never have done in my life—I felt as I imagine people must do who are on the verge of a fainting-fit. But I was conscious all the time; I knew Mr. Redworth came across to me with quick steps, and was aware that his first act was to move the crystal away. "You are faint," he said. "I was afraid of it upstairs. The incense affected you; will you lie down?" No, I said; I should be all right directly; it was nothing; but might I have a glass of water? The Indian servant came in at the moment with a tray of coffee, and our host despatched him for sundry restoratives. Wine was brought me as well as water, but I would only take the latter, and presently some coffee. And indeed the uncomfortable sensations passed quickly, leaving me without the previous giddiness, though my head and eyes ached for an hour or more, and I felt dull and inert.

Of course Gregory and Lady Sudeleigh were much concerned, but I did my best to reassure them; and the cause Mr. Redworth had assigned for my indisposition was accepted without demur. Lady Sudeleigh said she knew what it was to be readily affected by powerful odours; she could not bear hyacinths in a room, and so on. The carriage came round shortly after, and our host put us into it, Gregory hav-

ing already set out on foot; but before our departure Mr. Redworth contrived the opportunity for a question breathed low at my ear. "I am not mistaken. I watched you. It was the crystal?"

"Yes."

"And you saw—her?" very eagerly.

I had but time to sign an assent, when interruption came between us, and he could ask no more.

Whether it was the chill of the March wind after our pilgrimage through Coldhope hothouses, or only a piece of the general contrariety of things I know not; but on the morning after Mr. Redworth's luncheon I woke with a severe cold. It was not bad enough to confine me to bed, or so I thought; but I felt ill and wretched as one does under such conditions; unfit to go out, or for anything but an easy chair by the fireside. It was the more unlucky, as this was Lady Sudeleigh's last day with us; her departure had been arranged for the Saturday morning. I did not see much of her through the forenoon as she was sitting with Eleanor; and about three o'clock Gregory came in to ask her if she would go over the church with him, as he wanted to explain to her the lines of the proposed restoration. It was a good deal later when they set out, for Mathilde had to be summoned, and Lady Sudeleigh's toilette was always an elaborate affair. They went alone; Janie was upstairs writing letters for Eleanor. I was glad of the quiet; my head ached too much for occupation with book or work, and I sat quite idly looking away through the window at the pale winter sky and thinking of many things; of my life at St. Cyprian's, the coming of that illness which closed its usefulness, and of older scenes still, with which this narrative has nothing to do.

Lady Sudeleigh was away longer than I expected; the light began to fade in the room and my corner to become shadowy, though the afternoon had not yet merged in twilight out of doors. At last I heard a footstep,—an impetuous entrance—first into the hall, and then to the room where I was. I hardly knew it for Lady Sudeleigh's; she had a stately way of moving which did not lend itself to the idea of haste; but Lady Sudeleigh it was, looking at me from the door in blank astonishment. "Miss Varney, was it you in the road? I saw you but this moment outside; I followed you in!"

"Certainly it was not I. I have not moved from this chair since you left me."

I suppose my appearance carried conviction as well as my words; she glanced back into the hall and then shut the door, coming to a seat beside me and putting her hand on mine. "Miss Varney," she said, "I was right. Barbara is alive and here. What the explanation is I cannot say, but I have seen her and I know."

CHAPTER IX.

"I WALKED to the church with Mr. Alleyne," went on Lady Sudeleigh; "you know all that. We looked over it, both outside and in, and I saw the arch that is blocked up. Then he said he had an errand in the village, and I proposed to accompany him part of the way and return alone. I like exercise and am accustomed to take it, and I was enjoying the crisp air. I went down the road with him, some distance, and then turned back; and when I came in sight of the churchyard I saw a figure moving about among the graves. I did not notice it particularly; but presently it came out at the gate into the road in front of me, and then I saw it was

either you or Barbara. You know what I noticed yesterday morning, that sometimes you have a look of her?"

"Yes."

"Well, it was natural to think of you the first moment rather than of her; and she was dressed very much as you were yesterday, in a close-fitting jacket and serge skirt. She did not look towards me in shutting the gate, but turned and walked on in front, quite naturally, not as if she were hurrying for any reason or afraid of being seen. I called your name,—Miss Varney!—but she walked on and took no notice; and as I followed I could see that the hat was different from any I had seen you wear?"

"What was it like?"

"It was a black sailor-hat with a blue and white ribbon; Barbara used to wear it at Filey last year; I have seen it dozens of times. Of course you may have one like it; they are quite common, and I could not tell."

"Did not you see the face?"

"No. And I did not notice the hair at the time; but I could declare it was her curly crop, not in plaits like yours. She turned in at the Rectory gate which was set open, and I lost sight of her round the turn of the drive going straight to the house."

"Were you far behind?"

"No, for I was hurrying after her; but the instant she was out of sight I began to think it must have been you. But I see it could not have been; I am satisfied of that."

"No," I said again, "it was not I."

"I am thankful Richard has sailed! It was my first thought. I don't believe she is in the house, or surely there would have been some disturbance; there is not a sound in Eleanor's room overhead. What can it all mean,—why is she hanging about here,—and what is to be done?"

"We must tell Gregory. But do

you know, Lady Sudeleigh, I am afraid it may prove to be,—the same kind of appearance we witnessed in the drawing-room."

"My dear Miss Varney, do you really mean to suggest that what I have just seen was a ghost?"

"I do not call it by that name. I don't know what it was; but I think whatever we saw then, you have seen now."

"I cannot think it possible that I, with all my wits about me,—not excited or alarmed or expectant as you were—saw anything at all but what was there in sober fact. You may take my word for it that it was Barbara in the flesh, every bit as living and substantial as you are before me at this moment."

"Then if it was Barbara in the flesh she must be sought for and brought home. We must not keep this to ourselves a moment longer." I drew my shawl about me and rang the bell, only to encounter a fresh difficulty. Mary answered it, the servant who witnessed the former apparition and had been so greatly terrified. To say anything to her would be most unwise; she would lose control of herself and alarm Eleanor. Asking if Mr. Alleyne had come in, I was answered, as I expected, in the negative, so I sent a message summoning Evans to come to us.

Evans came shortly and stood within the door with her usual dull composure; but as I proceeded to tell her Lady Sudeleigh had seen a person in the road, and turning in at the drive, whom she took for Miss Alleyne, and that I thought it desirable there should be a search, without alarming the rest of the household if this could be avoided, the unprepossessing elderly face began to work with strong emotion, and the hands which fingered her apron to tremble. "Yes, ma'am, I'll look; but we sha'n't find anything."

It's our young lady sure enough, and she can't rest in her grave because we don't know. She came before and she's come again; and she will come and come, God rest her, till it's all made clear!"

"But, my good woman, it was no ghost I saw," put in Lady Sudeleigh with some impatience. "It may not have been Miss Alleyne: it may only have been some one like her; but whoever it was I can be sure of one thing,—it was as real as I am myself. There will be no end to it if you all pick up this infection about seeing ghosts. Indigestion and imagination; that is what it all comes to!"

"I have never seen a ghost in my life, my lady, and don't look to; but it doesn't hinder them being there. No, I've never seen anything; but when I'm awake at nights I can hear my young lady's footsteps wandering up and down. I ought to know them after all these years,—me as was the first to set her on her feet to run alone. And it's wander they will till we are at rest about her, and them as are guilty have got their deserts."

Lady Sudeleigh shrugged her shoulders with an incredulous smile, but Evans's conviction was proof against both the argument and the ridicule.

"Go," I said, "and look in the yard and garden; and ask if any one was seen there about the time Lady Sudeleigh returned." She was departing, unconvinced but obedient, when the door opened and Gregory came in. To him also I had to detail the story; and he went out instantly to search the garden, telling Evans to go over the house. He came back to us before long, looking grave and sad, and shook his head in answer to my inquiry. Nobody was there: no one had seen anything; and this last mystery remained as destitute of explanation as the other. What he thought of it was plain, though he said little, and

Lady Sudeleigh did not vex him with sceptical argument; indeed it struck me she had become a shade uncomfortable herself, and was glad for personal reasons that the subject should be avoided. Gregory thought it better not to tell Eleanor anything, so we observed complete silence, and I doubt if even Janie knew.

Lady Sudeleigh left us next morning, and I was in bed when she departed; my cold, instead of mending, had become heavier and more disabling, and I was perforce obliged to keep my room for a couple of feverish days and nights. Now was the time for imagination to run riot, and in the lonely hours and long vigils before the dawn to play me tricks at will; but although memory was busy with what had been, Barbara came not; and my strained ears were dull to the footsteps which Evans could hear.

When I was able to be up again I learned that Mr. Redworth had called twice to see me, and had expressed concern on hearing I was confined to my room. I thought Janie had grown to look very ill in the two days; she was white and heavy-eyed, but she would not admit that anything ailed her. Eleanor, on the contrary, seemed to have drawn from Lady Sudeleigh's society a revival of energy; and when I went in to see her after Dr. Carpenter's visit, she was sitting up with a new look on her face. "I have decided, Susan," she said to me. "The specialist is to come over, and if an operation is advised I will submit. If they can render it possible for me to live a little longer, I must make the effort for Gregory's sake. You never thought he did the best for himself in marrying me; no, I don't blame you; but we have been a great deal to each other for all that, and he would miss me if I left him alone. After Barbara went, it seemed as if all was over for me; but I was wrong to think it,

wrong not to remember what I had left; I have told him and he is glad. It is a comfort to me that you will be with him; and you will help me to have courage."

So it came about that the next few weeks brought a crisis of anxiety to the gray Rectory. A white-capped nurse came to assist Evans, and there were certain hours during which the life of the wife and mistress hung upon a thread; and days to follow when we dared only to hope with trembling. But I am going on too far. I must return to the earlier part of March, after Lady Sudeleigh's departure and before the specialist came down; for I want to speak of Janie. She was always silent and uncomplaining, but she had become manifestly ill; her eyes grew to have dark circles round them, and I could see she made little more than a pretence of eating at our meals. Gregory said to me more than once that he thought she was ailing; she had become less active in the parish, and he missed his little curate.

The first time I went out after my cold she accompanied me, and as she was the bearer of a basket of little delicacies for an invalid and a message to one of the cottages, we walked in that direction. There was little nucleus of village: the houses were mostly scattered; but this particular one stood in a row of three or four, with the general shop at the corner, and the inevitable alehouse over the way. At the door Janie delivered her message, which was received in sulky silence, the woman seeming at first as if she would hardly take the basket from her hand. I was struck by the strangeness of her manner; but on asking a question myself about the sick mother, the woman's face relaxed at once into a smile, and she asked me civilly enough if I would step within. I did so, taking it for granted Janie was following me; but

finding myself alone, I said only a brief word or two to the sick woman, and then as soon as possible rejoined her outside.

"Why did you not come in?" I said to her. "Mrs. Pearson is not nearly so surly as she looks."

"The people don't like me in their houses," she answered in a low voice; "and as I know that,—it has been made very plain to me of late—I cannot intrude."

We were walking on down the road, when out of an open door just in front of us ran a flaxen-headed toddling child, only to fall face downward on the path, and set up a piteous wail. Janie was readier than I, and had picked it up and was consoling it, holding it to her and soothing the frightened sobs, when the mother appeared on the scene, tore it out of her arms without a word, as if indeed she had injured instead of succouring it, and retreated again within the house. I shall not soon forget Janie's face as she looked dumbly at me, and I looked back at her with growing understanding and dismay. We turned away from the village as if by a common impulse, and took the path leading to the moor. Neither of us spoke as we breasted the steepness of the hill; but when at the top, and we had paused for breath and to look out over that rolling expanse of purple and brown, now beginning to quicken with the new spring and just then dappled with sun and shadow as the clouds floated over before the light breeze, Janie turned to me at last. "Cousin Susan," she said, "you see how things are. You warned me; but I did not dream it could be like this with the people I came amongst almost as a child. They all think of me as that boy did not scruple to speak. Whether it is that I have murdered Barbara, or betrayed her, or hidden her, I know not; but they

consider me guilty in some way, and I cannot bear it any longer. I can be of no more use among them or to uncle. I must go away."

"Let Gregory speak to the people. He has no idea of this. He will be distressed and indignant beyond measure that you should be treated in this way."

"No, a thousand times no. I could not bear it. There must be no discussion. And what have I to complain of,—an averted face,—a changed manner? No; it is the thought in their hearts. Nothing will alter that till Barbara comes back to clear me."

"You must be brave, Janie. Live it down. If you let it hunt you away, will it not seem like something you dare not face?"

"I have faced it for weeks. At first I could not believe it, but it grew; the suspicious looks, the changed faces,—and now even the children!"

"But it must have grown from some beginning. Let Gregory sift the rumour, and find out who set it on foot,—whether the servants have said anything, or Evans, though she was cautioned."

"You mean about the dress? No, I don't think it is Evans. She condemns me as they all do; but she is very loyal to the family credit, and I in a way am of the family."

"Then have you an idea who it is? You are as unlikely to have an enemy as poor Barbara was."

"You asked me before whom I suspected. You will think me insane if I tell you; and it seems wicked besides, when I have no proof." Her eyes wandered from mine to the woods below us, and I saw them change and darken.

"Janie! you cannot mean Mr. Redworth?"

She looked at me full, saying neither ay nor no, but her face was

an admission. It turned me cold from head to foot. My first impulse was an indignant disclaimer, and then I remembered the thought which had grown in my own mind, and how it seemed to have been communicated silently from his.

"These same people who are unfriendly to me now were unfriendly to him once; they may be still for all I know. They used to say he had the evil eye. I feel as if his dislike to me,—his knowledge of my mind, which when he chooses to read it I cannot hide—had been used to poison something about me, some atmosphere, which, wherever I go, breeds the suspicion with which he would brand me, as his own safeguard."

"Janie, Janie, it is too terrible! Think what you are saying."

But she was roused now and would not be stayed. "It is terrible,—for me. Aunt Eleanor is changed; it would be a relief to her if I were gone. Even you have had misgivings; I have seen them in your face. The only two against whom he has been powerless as yet are Uncle Gregory and—Dick Sudeleigh."

"My dear, you are frightfully morbid; perhaps it is not wonderful when you have been so tried. Yet surely you would not be superstitious like these villagers; if wrong in your case, why should they be right in his? It is a fantastic dream. And even granted he had the power, why should Mr. Redworth attempt to injure you?"

"Because he knows I suspect him about Barbara as every one else suspects me."

The avowal had come at last, and was almost a relief to me. What had gone before had impressed me more than I was willing to acknowledge, but now I was able to be indignant and the reaction was complete. "That is an awful thought to have,"

I said severely. "Mr. Redworth is a good and honourable man, and your uncle's friend. He loved Barbara, and would never have harmed her."

"If I am wrong, it is only in saying what I cannot prove. I did not mean to tell you, but you drew it from me. Take it as unsaid if you will, but not in the sense that I retract it. He loved her,—yes; and love should be a safeguard, I admit it, if he were all you think. And once she loved him, but not for long. But I tell you this, Cousin Susan, she was afraid of him; afraid when he sent her the dagger,—afraid when she dared not sleep alone or walk out alone after we came back from Filey,—afraid when the marriage was hurried on so that she might get away and be safe. I say it only this once, to the winds and to you; he was her enemy and he is mine." The small childish face was fixed and stern. I said what I could, for my heart was hot within me; but I might as well have beaten at a rock. "Let us leave it," she said at last. "One of us must be wrong. If I have judged harshly, I have also suffered. Cousin Susan, you are a good woman, better than I by far, and so it is harder to you to credit evil. Goodness means strength, does it not? I want some one strong to help me, and I turn to you. Make Uncle Gregory understand what he must; spare him all you can, but help me to get away."

We were walking on now along the ridge to a further and more gradual descent than the steep path by which we had come. "Have you any plans?" I said.

"I thought of St. Cyprian's. You were not very happy when you went there. Did you find the work engross you so that there was less room for haunting thoughts? That is what I want. My life is too empty here, and it is growing emptier."

"There is plenty to do, and to do it well one must put one's heart into it. But it is not easy, Janie; there is much that is trying, disappointing, arduous. You are very young, and far less strong than I was; and you see, I broke down."

"I am stronger than you think, and surely I could help with the children. They might trust me with the children, for I love them so. I have nursed them for the village women here, and sat up with them when they were sick. You were telling us about the crèche the other day, and that the sisters were in need of help. Will you write and ask them if they will take me as a probationer?"

Well, the end of it was I promised to make the inquiry provided Gregory approved; and as we walked I gave her certain details about the duties she would have to undertake and the conditions of her service. I reminded her it would be unpaid; in my case that presented no difficulty as I have an independent income,—small it is true, though sufficient for all moderate needs; but I did not know how she might be placed.

"I think I can manage," was her answer. "When Uncle and Aunt Alleyne adopted me, my father made over my mother's little fortune,—it was only a few hundreds—for my use. I have the interest of it, and as uncle has been very generous to me it has accumulated. I can contrive to live, and what I am craving for is not gain but work."

There was a light about her eyes as she talked as if she longed to be up and doing, and I felt I must make it my part to widen this chink of hope. I never could see that man's doom of labour was a curse: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread" is more like a blessing in disguise. What is it Shakespeare says about sleep being the balm for hurt minds?

I would counsel a dose of hard work in its place. Toil, and the energy to meet it, and a measure of success to crown it; that would be my notion of Heaven. A material one, by the way, which might shock some finer fancies.

We were nearly home, when just as the bye-lane reached the high road, whom should we encounter but Mr. Redworth. I confess to an impulse of dismay; we had not met since my vision in the crystal, and I fully believed that when he sought me at the Rectory it was to ask for particulars. I had an idea the history might now be demanded, and I felt out of tune with him and the subject, and unwilling to enter upon it. Little as I credited Janie's strange fancies concerning him, they had not been wholly without effect on me, for the time. I wondered if the man was really a magician. He looked keenly at me as he approached, both at me and my companion, lifted his hat with a smile, and passed us by without a word. The smile was a sweet one, with a peculiar comprehension about it which gave my conscience a pang. I was at once relieved and disappointed, and there was a lurking feeling of irritation with Janie at the bottom of my mind. Our talk was silenced; but indeed a few more steps brought us to the Rectory gate,—the gate through which Lady Sudeleigh had followed the figure of Barbara not many days before. Janie said with a gasp as she opened it: "I believe that man knows every word I have spoken this afternoon, for all he was miles away and you and I were alone on the moor!"

I need only say further about Janie's plans that I took Gregory into confidence in the course of the day following. He was, as I anticipated, both indignant and distressed at the annoyance to which she had been sub-

jected, and unwilling to let her go. I pleaded her cause as well as I could; and in the end he gave a conditional sanction about St. Cyprian's. She was to try it for a time only, and there were to be no vows; but nothing was to be done or said at this juncture which could disturb Eleanor. Janie must wait till her aunt was convalescent; and then, if her mind was still unchanged, I could speak to him again.

Several days went by before I saw Mr. Redworth: he neither came to the Rectory nor met us in our walks; and I think Gregory missed his visits as he commented on their intermission. One afternoon,—I remember it as the day before the specialist came down—I had gone for an hour's practice at the church, thinking I might not have another opportunity for some time if our anxieties about Eleanor increased. I was at first wholly absorbed in trying some new music, the execution of which was difficult to my unpractised feet and fingers, and I had to repeat more than one passage before I could be satisfied with the rendering. I passed on to a symphony of Mozart's which was familiar and presented less mechanical difficulty, so that my heart could go out on the flood of delicate harmonies. I was full of enjoyment when the melody abruptly terminated in a groan from the instrument, and the keys became soundless under my touch. I turned to reprove the indolence of my coadjutor, a small boy, Tim Sykes by name (who was usually very willing to earn sixpence by acting as blower whenever I needed his assistance), and found his head bent down on the wooden lever, while he was snivelling and sobbing in a dismal fashion. Now I could hardly attribute this phenomenon to the effect of my music on the unsophisticated mind of youth, so I concluded Tim was suffering from some physical malady.

"What is the matter, my boy?" I said. "Are you not well to-day?"

The sobs went on and the voice, when it came at last, was choked with them. "I'm afeared; I can't stay here no longer; I'm afeared."

This was not in the least what I expected. "What are you afraid about?" I questioned, rather sharply, it must be owned, for I was vexed by the interruption.

The answer came amid more sobs, "I'm afeared of the woman," and left me as perplexed as before.

"Sit up and stop crying, and tell me plainly what it is, for I can't understand you. You want to earn your sixpence as you have done before?"

I spoke energetically, and the small boy did make an effort to pull himself together in obedience; but the matter was only fathomed after much questioning. Yes, he wanted to earn sixpence, and his mother was expecting it; evidently there would be a serious business if it were not forthcoming. He did not mind blowing, but he was "afeared of the woman," and sobs again followed the confession.

"Tell me at once, Tim, who the woman is and why she frightens you. Tell me the truth about it, and you shall have your sixpence and go home."

The witness thus bribed did his best. The woman was like a shadow, and came when I was playing. He saw her first by the altar-rails, and she was kneeling down; this was the time before, and then he didn't mind

it as she was so far off, and looked like a real person who might have come in. But this time she had come quite near, close behind me as I sat at the organ, and he seemed to have noticed that the appearance was in some way unnatural. "What was it like?" I kept asking him, and the answer came at last. It was gray; he couldn't say what it was dressed in, he couldn't see the face plainly; but it was like "Miss Barbara who went away."

"Do you see it now?" I said; and I confess to a thrill on my own part as I looked down the apparently empty church. Not now, the boy said; it only came as I was playing,—"*peeping like, and going back*"; and the last time it came so close he thought it was going to touch him, and then his courage gave way.

It was no use to keep him longer; that at least was clear. I produced the promised coin, and while his doleful countenance brightened at the sight, I told him he must have been dreaming. I was not angry with him, I said, but he had better not speak of such foolish fancies any more.

I gathered up my music with a sigh, and proceeded to let him and myself out at the small private door through the vestry of which I had the key. The boy took to his heels at once; but when I turned from securing the lock, I started almost as much as if I had seen the gray figure he described to me. Sitting on the flat slab of a square tomb, and smoking a cigar, was Mr. Redworth of Coldhope.

(To be continued.)

LEGENDS OF OLD SAINT MALO.

It is a little compact, walled town, with narrow streets and small shop-windows ; a flood of sunshine over it, but a constant shade lying between its tall crowded houses ; around it, broad modern suburbs and gay watering-places, but within its embracing walls all that is left to us of the past. And that is at once the beauty and the disappointment of St. Malo, according to one's point of view.

She is not, and cannot be, appreciated on first sight, or at first acquaintance, even by those who have eyes to read the writing on her walls, or ears to hear the voices with which her ancient stones call out. One must grow familiar with her ways, with her wonderful nooks and crannies, with her underlying life still full of old-world customs, with all the wrinkled face of her that time has left to us ; it is only with some knowledge and understanding that one can wholly perceive her beauty. And to those others, who came in from the gay broad beaches where brand-new villas rise yearly, what is to be seen in these dark streets and winding lanes that to unfamiliar eyes is worth seeing at all ?

Yet the longer one lives near her, the oftener one comes and goes within her walls, the fairer she grows and the more desirable ; till presently the veil drops from her face, and she shows us what she is, and what she has been in that past wherein she played so great a part. And surely, even to the indifferent, one may try to express something of her charm, as she sits compactly within her sunlit walls in the midst of the wide purple waters ; one may try to repeat some of

the stories which she herself is so ready to tell us ; one may try to make her a little more intimately known to those who come and go about her, through some of the old legends which the guide-books have not time to remember, or leisure to set down. For St. Malo is not to be measured by the height of her church-spire or the circumference of her walls ; nor even by the names of the great men who have been born or died within her boundaries ; but rather by the voices that reach us from her past, the voices of the stones of her which cry out to us, the voices of history, of legend, of superstition. One may well go to the guide-books for Dinard, for Paramé, for the new bathing-places along the broad yellow beaches of Brittany ; for St. Malo there is but one book that has anything to tell of her, but one book that is full of her legends, her customs, and her life.¹ And partly from that book, and partly from local tradition, and partly, also, from much coming and going within her walls, it has seemed possible to gather a few of the stories with which her ancient streets are loud, hoping that thereby she may make new friends.

The House of Silver, for instance, on which most passers bestow indeed an indifferent commendation, for it is good to look upon, yet it has a story to tell ; one that lingers about it, and lends life to its gray stone face,—life, and also a memory of death.

In the Place Broussais, once the Place du Piloni, southward of the great door of the church, the House

¹ LA CÔTE D'ÉMERAUDE, by E. Herpin.

of Silver stands amid its neighbours, older than they and finer, with a stately front of carved stone, with rows of tall windows, and with a magnificent oaken door. But if it is fine still, in the days when Louis the Fifteenth was king in France it was a very palace in comparison with the surrounding crowd of ancient wooden houses, the highest of whose overhanging stories stood humbly about its knees. And the House of Silver was something more than this; if it was the stateliest dwelling in the town, it was also the home of the fairest and unhappiest lady in all the Clos-Poulet;¹ it was the home of Guillemette de la Marzellière.

Guillemette was the only daughter of a builder of ships, one of those who sent out the vessels which made St. Malo famous in all the ends of the earth. Of such men were the Malouins whom princes loved to honour; of such men were the corsairs, and Jacques Cartier, and others who stayed more ignobly at home, and yet helped nevertheless to make their city famous. And Guillemette was the daughter of one of these, and the most beautiful maiden in the town. She was seventeen, and betrothed, some say, to her cousin Léon, who was in the guard of honour of the noble Duchesse Maclovie de Duras; certainly they loved each other as the sequel shows.

For presently it happened that the noble Duchess came to St. Malo, and was welcomed to the town, according to custom, by maidens clad in white and bearing flowers; and Guillemette was chosen, as fairest among the fair, to present the tributary silver spindle. For in Brittany, where there was no Salic law and lands and honours were free to pass in the female line, to liege lady and princess homage and welcome were paid in the offering of a

begarlanded spindle. Thus Guillemette was seen in her beauty by the Marquis de la Marzellière, a gentleman of the Duchess's suite, who straightway fell so heartily in love with her that he betook himself to her father and demanded her hand in marriage. Whereto Messire Belin, caring not at all for that uncertain betrothal with Léon, or for the tears and supplications of his daughter, gave prompt consent with many accompanying oaths.

That night there was a great ball to welcome the Duchess, given at the Hôtel Granville where she lodged. All St. Malo was there, and Guillemette left her tears at home and went thither also; for there she knew that she would meet Léon. And presently it came about that from the midst of light and laughter, while a minuet was being danced by the Duchess and the finest gentleman of St. Malo, Guillemette and Léon fled silently out into the darkness, taking their way to the rampart whence with a rope-ladder they could descend to the beach of Bon-Secours, there to take boat, and so to Dinard and safety. But when Léon was down, and Guillemette just about to follow him, out of the darkness behind her came the angry arms of her father, Messire Belin, who had followed her in her flight and now held her prisoner, swearing by a thousand thunders of Brest that he would know how to make her obey him. And down below, on the beach so mockingly named of Bon-Secours, four men flung themselves upon Léon and carried him away, first, across the water to Dinard, and then by rough and secret paths to a lonely manor near Plancoët.

Flung across a horse, gagged and bound, the long dark ride by field and through forest was bitter enough for Léon; and not the less bitter that by this very way he had hoped to carry

¹ The local name for the Malouin district.

off his lady. But at St. Malo this black night was blacker still for poor Guillemette, who was told that Léon was drowned, and incontinently went near to die of sorrow. Yet she did not die: there are those, strong to suffer, to whom death comes lingeringly; and Guillemette was one of them. But, as one supposes, in the lassitude that lay upon her, the carelessness of life or self, the constant pressure on her feebleness of her father's angry will, she let herself drift into submission and was presently betrothed to the Marquis de la Marzelière; and presently also, in the same indifferent misery, she let her maidens dress her for her marriage at midnight in the old cathedral, with all the doors flung open as was due and customary. But there was one guest for whom there was neither invitation nor welcome. Léon had escaped from his guardians and came with all speed to St. Malo; finding no boat at Dinard he swam across, and making his way hardly into the town, he reached the open door of the cathedral a few short minutes after midnight. There he stood, in the glare of the torches, on the steps leading down into the church from the west door, the water running from him and his face white and drawn with fatigue. To the gay crowd who swarmed about the altar-rail he must have seemed a sorry wedding-guest; but to the eyes of Guillemette, the sea had certainly given up its dead; and it was too late!

Thereafter she smiled no more. Vainly her husband took her to Court, vainly he brought her back to St. Malo. Vainly he built for her, in the place of the ancient wooden house where she had been born, the finest palace that could be imagined: a tall stately house of granite graciously carven, as it is still to-day, save that then, according to tradition, it had a

roof of silver. But Guillemette smiled no more. She looked out of her high window with sad bewildered eyes,—eyes that were as blue as the sky, and as empty of all understanding; Guillemette who had become as a little child again; poor mad Guillemette, who pulled down one by one the silver tiles that were within her reach, and threw them, as one tosses crumbs to the waiting birds, to the children in the street below, crying to them constantly, “Little ones, little ones, go seek my love!”

And so Guillemette died. Yonder in the church,—it is no more a cathedral—under a cross-stone of marble, she lies at the foot of the lady-altar; in the church where she had been baptised, where she had made her first communion, where, on a certain midnight, she had been married, there she was buried, with, one doubts not, a suitable magnificence of mourning draperies and the pomp of her rank. And there one may find her still, if one seek carefully for the worn cross-stone: *Guillemette, Dame Marquise de la Marzelière*. And perhaps, or so one hopes, unnamed and unknown, Léon may lie not far away. But near by in the *Pièce Broussais* the House of Silver still looks down gravely out of its splendid windows, and its carven granite walls have changed not at all. Almost one can perceive the memories that lurk within them, and catch a glimpse at that upper window of a frail figure tossing down the silver tiles and calling constantly to the children below, “Little ones, little ones, go seek my love!”

Round the nearest corner, and a little way up a marvellous street of ancient houses, stands the *Château des Bigorneaux*, or House of Periwinkles, bending forward with its broad projecting stories as if peer-

ing curiously down the Rue Gouin de Beauchêne that opens in front of it. A very wonderful house even to look at; the most wonderful, perhaps, in all that wonderful alley. The wood-work is worn and stained and roughened into many colours, golden and tawny and black, panelled and cunningly wrought, with traces of the gay paint and gilding that has been washed away from it. The sun, travelling down the street of an evening low and bright, mellows its splendid tints to a sober magnificence, and touches the long ranks of tiny panes of glass which overlap each other in the strip of window running the whole width of each story. Of these there are five, each projecting further over the street, and lit by the dappled strip of glittering iridescent window; five overhanging stories, so that on the ground there is a dark continuous shadow about the archways heaped with motley things for sale; faded gaudy garments, fishermen's boots, and rusted ironwork, tawny or grass-green pots, round-bellied and thin-lipped, quaint two-handled earthen and copper pipkins,—all catching the late sunshine as it comes along the street of an evening, glittering in the gutter that runs down the middle of the cobble-stoned pavement. On either side of Number 28 (for it bears that number visibly and hideously above its ancient door), up and down, opposite, and along the Rue Gouin de Beauchêne, there are other houses, old and quaint and curious. It is not alone, and yet in a sense it is apart from the others, even though they lean up against it; it is alone in its age, for these in their decay are yet younger; it is alone, one thinks, in its beauty. And when the sun comes down the street of an evening, and the ancient house gathers the light to itself and glows therein golden and soft, one looks at it curiously, wondering what is the

story that it must certainly have to tell.

One knows dimly that it was once the home of some great Malouin family; one can imagine a day when, standing among its fellows, in this alley bordered with the high projecting houses that almost shut out the blue sky, it would have been a fit dwelling for any lord or lady. For certainly in those days life was simpler and less reticent. How could it be otherwise when the house fronts were of timber of hundreds and hundreds of tiny overlapping panes of glass, staring out into the street like lidless inquisitive eyes, set in frames of wood strangely carven and gilded, and sometimes overlaid with many-coloured tiles? How could it be otherwise when these frontages of glass drew constantly nearer together as they rose above the narrow alley? Such was, and is, the Château des Bigorneaux; and yet the story that it tells us to-day is neither of lord nor of lady, nor after all so very ancient.

In that uncertain time,—or, as they say here, in the pleasant yesterdays,—there lived in one of the rooms of the old house a poor woman whose trade was to sell periwinkles. And in that time, also, periwinkles were almost the only dainty of the Clos-Poulet. They alone, with the strangely shaped biscuits made immemorially in the country-side, were sold at the door of the cathedral as one came out from high mass: they alone, with those same biscuits, were sold at the fair held at the Grand' Porte, at that called the Sainte-Ouine on the grand Bey, at the Fair of Periwinkles on the Quai St. Louis, —fairs that were famous then for many leagues around; and they alone were the favourite dinner of the Malouins when Lent came back and men sang the canticle of the Passion from door to door.

But once on a time this old woman fell ill seeking for her periwinkles about the rocks of the Bey and Gros Malo : Gros Malo, where the bombs thrown by the English struck and so saved the citizens ; which has given its name to the great bell that hangs in the church spire, because of a saying among the people that the town will last just so long as Gros Malo is above water. And since the old woman had fallen ill, there were no periwinkles for her to sell, and no pence to be brought home, and her son must go hungry. Her son had been a *Terreneuvas*,¹ tall and strong, her pride and her dependence ; but one day, as happens so often amid the fogs and the rocks of those far waters, he had been shipwrecked. All who were with him had been lost ; and of him also the best was left behind in the gray confusion of the fogs ; for the sea sent home to his mother only the flesh and bone of him and kept back all that had made of him a man. The fear of death had turned his brain, and he came home even as a little helpless child. In her bed the old periwinkle-seller tossed and moaned feverishly, crying out in her delirium that next day was Christmas, and that she had no periwinkles to sell ; that when all the world came out from high mass she would not be there in her place, and that since there were no periwinkles there would certainly be nothing for her son to eat.

And it happened, with the strange happenings which we call chance, that her son heard her, and in a fashion understood. And he understood also that it was Christmas-time, and that now the Child-Jesus passed through the night air, His heart full of grace and His hands of gifts, on His way to

fill the shoes of the children upon earth whom He loved. The poor fellow understood this, because they had told him so when he, too, was a child ; and now he was once more one of those little ones to whom, on this night, the Child-Jesus came. And opening the window he knelt down, and looking up into the blue night sky he asked stammeringly, with his poor helpless lips, of the Child-Jesus, who was certainly passing by, for periwinkles, for as many as would fill his great shoes, which he had put side by side on the wide hearth. Then in the clear night air the bells began to ring, and a strange cloud gathered and came together, drifting in from the shore. From the Bey, from Gros Malo, from the *Ébiheus*, from *Cézembre*, came a cloud of periwinkles, that filled, and heaped up, and overflowed from his great shoes ; from *St. Jacut*, from *St. Cast*, from the *Cap Fréhel*, from all the coast they came, till there was no room for more : till the floors were covered with them and the walls, till they lay thickly upon the roofs, and were piled high even in the great zinc gutters.

And next day, when all the world came out from high mass, the old woman and her son sold the periwinkles at the door. Every one wanted to buy, but there were more than enough for all ; and there was a Christmas dinner for mother and son, and perhaps a little new taper set humbly amidst the great candles of richer folk in the cathedral.

Since then the good people of the quarter call the stately house which stands on tiptoe, peering down the *Rue Gouin de Beauchêne*, the *Château des Bigorneaux*, the Castle of the Periwinkles ; and since then, every year on Christmas Eve the periwinkles come again from all the coast in a wonderful miraculous cloud, covering the floor and the walls, lying thick

¹ The men who go yearly to fish on the Newfoundland banks are locally called the *Terreneuvas*, as also are their vessels ; the Icelandic fishers are called the *Islandais*.

upon the roof and piled high in the great zinc gutters, so that all who pass in the street who are pure of heart may see them for themselves; but only, so they tell us carefully, the pure of heart.

Not very far from the cathedral, but reached by a maze of ancient streets and alleys, some not so wide as the span of one's arms, there is a tiny court. One may go to it by way of the house of Duguay-Trouin, where the great corsair lived; where he consulted with his fellows whether they should lend thirty million francs to the King of France; where he planned his raids upon the Spanish Main; where perhaps his daughter (it was certainly the daughter of one of them) boxed the ears of a Prince of the Blood because he was not punctilious enough in his courtesy. There, too, when the dinner with its silver dishes and costly meats was over, the fricassée de piastres was brought in, and the red hot golden pieces were flung down with laughter to the waiting crowd below. And the old house blinks beneath its overhanging brows, heavy with age; the others that once stood beside it are all gone, and even the ancient cross of the bishops has vanished, and there is only a niche filled with tawdry flowers and a plaster figure, the Virgin of the quarter, Our Lady of the Croix-du-Pief.

Or one may go by the chapel of St. Aaron, the tiny oratory which is only opened at the Whitsun festivals, and which, to-day so silent, has behind it so wonderful a past; the little chapel which, to every Malouin, is doubly, trebly sacred ground. For here, more than a thousand years ago, St. Aaron lived and prayed, and taught Christianity to the people, dwelling holily on the summit of this rock, before, perhaps, the waters swept in over the great forest of Scissy. And here,

later, came to him St. Malo, the Welsh monk, who landed on the Island of the Harbour out yonder in the bay, the ancient port of Aleth, which is now St. Servan. Here, where one stands on the summit of the rock, in the midst of the old town of St. Malo, there was then no town, even no habitation at all. There was only a bare rude rock rising suddenly above the forest-lands, the marshes, and the wide treacherous sands; and on the top-most peak of it an uncouth heap of huge stones, which was St. Aaron's sanctuary; and even long after, the people of the great neighbouring town of Aleth had no name for it but St. Aaron's Rock. It was also the sanctuary of St. Malo, who became later the first Christian bishop of the Clos-Poulet, and who, when St. Aaron died, embalmed him with his own hands. And there is, it is said, within the encasing of the present walls, having outlived all its rebuildings and restorations, a great stone, dating from that first rude sanctuary where St. Aaron lived and taught Christianity to the people, and, when the fogs crept in from the sea, blew upon a shell to warn fishermen from shipwreck in the treacherous shallows about his rock; whence, later, St. Malo was called to lay off the hermit's gown and to put on the robes of a bishop. Here, beneath the paved floor, lie the bones of St. Aaron, just as they were torn up secretly and in hot haste from their place in the cathedral, when the Sans Culottes were laying profane hands upon the Church and its treasures; torn up to be brought here and reburied, by night and in silence, without state and without ceremony. So it was that the bones of St. Aaron came home at last to rest where, so long ago, he had lived and died. Here, rather than in cathedral or church, St. Aaron is at home.

Yet one arm of him has been guarded elsewhere, and is still one of the treasures of St. Malo. When, in those days, the ships of the English came in sight, the honourable Chapter of the cathedral walked in procession through the streets and round the ramparts, bearing the arm in its rich case of gold before them; singing, as they went, a litany, which had for refrain and response a prayer for help against the English: "From the fury of the English, good Lord, deliver us!" And then, in the tiny chapel of St. Aaron mass was said, and St. Malo took confidence and feared not at all the descent of the enemy. Therefore, says tradition, the town remained virgin and impregnable, being guarded by saints and angels; and therefore the arm of St. Aaron is elsewhere to-day, and not at rest with himself in the chapel built upon the spot where once he lived and died. But here, within the tiny oratory with its quaint wooden figures of the two saints, the hermit and the bishop, its splendid golden vessels, its panelled walls—here, where the guide will not enter but waits kneeling and praying upon the threshold—here is the beginning and the birthplace of the city of St. Malo, the first of it that emerges from the dim past, the cradle of the Clos-Poulet, of the corsairs, of all that has built itself in the passing of time into history. It is very sacred ground, and it has been sacred already for more than a thousand years.

Whichever way one takes, with patience and many turnings, one arrives at last at the tiny court of which we have spoken; the Cour La Houssaye, at the end of the Ruelle du Pélicot and the Rue Porcon de la Barbinais. And this court has also a story to tell.

Long ago when the houses of St. Malo were all of wood and glass like the Castle of the Periwinkles, or more

often still of rude timber frameworks covered with plaster and thatched with rush from the wide marshes, there was already one which was built fair and strong of Brittany granite. This one, the only one of its kind, had windows arched and moulded like those of the cathedral itself, and topped with curling vines and hanging clusters of grapes carved in relief. It had also a stately tower, with a coat of arms above its door that jutted out in front like a tall stone sentinel, keeping guard over the streets that climbed up to it, the Ruelle du Pélicot and the Rue Porcon de la Barbinais. And this fair and strong house in the little court was called then, as it is called still, the House of the Good Duchess Anne.

In the beginning of the year 1491 the Duchess dwelt there for a space; and those who passed by saw her daily, spinning with her silver spindle as she sat at her arched window. They could watch her spinning, spinning, as she thought of the future, for herself and for her broad and fair lands of Brittany. She had just betrothed herself with Maximilian of Austria, the White King who would one day be an Emperor; and she remembered sadly that thus her beautiful ermine must become German. And she remembered also that she had refused Charles of France, who was still a suitor for her hand, so sore in love was he with her wide duchy; and perhaps already she asked herself whether after all it were not better, since God had given no prince to Brittany, that her beautiful ermine should become French rather than some day German.

And as she thought, and as she wondered, she let her silver spindle lie idle in her lap, while her hounds slept about her feet. And one night as she sat thus, thinking and wondering, a knight rode by. The tramp of his horse's feet sounded on

the rough pavement like the sweet ringing of the Angelus; and in the moonlight his horse shone white against the night, white as the ermine that the good Duchess loved. And as he passed, in the old speech of her country he spoke to her: "Marry me, beautiful princess, and, neither German nor even French, thy white ermine shall be always the ermine of Brittany." But the Duchess did not answer, and the knight passed upon his way. Nevertheless the day after he came back, again, and always again, and always was his speech the same; but never a word did the Duchess answer, and at the end of the year Brittany became French.

But those who live to-day in the Cour la Houssaye and in the streets about it, say that when the Angelus rings one can sometimes hear the tramp of a horse's feet near by the House of the Duchess Anne; and when the white moon is high, there sometimes passes against the night the shape of a horse white as the ermine of ancient Brittany. And the grandams of St. Malo, the old women, rich and poor, who have heard the story when they were little children from those that went before them, still nod their old heads wisely when it happens that things go awry:—"All that perhaps would never have come to pass if the good Duchess had married the Knight of the White Horse, and if her white ermine had remained always the ermine of Brittany."

Four hundred years have gone since Brittany became France, and yet Brittany is Brittany still. The world has changed its face, yet St. Malo has withstood the hand of time, and the constant fretting of the sea, and the terrible north-west gales of winter; she has withstood even the destructiveness of man. And she will

withstand all these, tradition tells us, so long as a single taper burns before Our Lady of the Grand' Porte, where to-day not one but many twinkle and flicker unceasingly about the niche set within the stonework midway between the huge squat towers on either hand. Outside is the gray stone wall, a rude and candid strength; inside, the dark and narrow street running up to the flying buttresses of the choir, and high above, the white single spire set radiantly in the arch of sunshine and sky. And on the inner side of the gate in a wide vaulted niche fronted with glass, Our Lady of the Grand' Porte looks down, smiling, with tapers flickering amidst the flowers about her feet.

It is a busy little square beneath; busy at all times, busiest of all on certain infrequent days during the long quiet of winter. Here in autumn, when the Terreneuvas and the Islandais return, who are under her especial protection, and go yearly in pilgrimage to her shrine at St. Jouan des Guerêts, here they meet to make their engagements for the next season's fishing; brown-skinned and vague-eyed, with the long-sightedness of men who dwell much upon the sea. And the engagements they sign here, with perhaps a glass too many even for their strong heads, are signed also with the sea and the fogs and the long strong winds of the Banks. But through the tavern-windows they look up at Our Lady of the Grand' Porte, the Star of the Sea, the Patroness of St. Malo; and they are content to remember that even yonder her protection is with them still.

The winter passes, and Christmas with it; the midnight mass has gone by, with its loud uproarious bells pealing out across the water, and the coming and going of Christmas merry-makers. There are more tapers than can be counted shining about Our

Lady of the Grand' Porte, and a great wreath of evergreens is twisted about the stanchions that support the lamps below. But there are greater days for her to come.

Now it is Lent, and with it the Carnival. Outside on the Quai St. Louis, there are the swings and the booths and the lotteries; the quaint piled baskets of strangely-shaped biscuits, and the periwinkles in huge bowls; there are drums and trumpets, hideously vociferous, and a loud perpetual laughter that is not to be described in words. And inside the walls, where the crowd presses thickest, there are masks and dominoes, and figures grotesquely clad; there are false noses and painted faces; there are pierrots and clowns, devils and punchinellos, men in women's clothes and women in men's; there are pious folk, chaplet in hand, taking their way lingeringly to vespers, priests with breviaries tucked under their arms and tolerant wandering smiles, sisters in close black veils, or wide outstanding linen caps. There is life, life of all ages and of all conditions, about her feet, where Our Lady looks down from the Grand' Porte and smiles with understanding.

And a little later it is still another fair, or so it seems. Only outside the walls, along the Quai St. Louis, there are two great steamers which are rapidly filling with the last of the Terrenewas, the men who will join the fishing-schooners at St. Pierre-et-Miquelon. There are perhaps three thousand of them, rarely less, who are leaving their villages desolate and their homes empty; who will be starting presently for the summer's fishings, to return thence in late autumn, or perhaps—who knows?—to return not at all. There are so many wrecks, so many boats that vanish into the fogs and are no more heard of; in all the length and breadth of the Clos-Poulet,

so many widows who wait eternally for news, so many orphans.

Now the shrill wail of the steam-whistles sobs across the town, calling up the laggards; it is time to go, and Our Lady of the Grand' Porte looks down pitifully on those that pass beneath. For they are her children, and she is their mistress and their guard; and as, in hurrying through, they glance up at her and cross themselves, it seems to them that in her smile there lies a terrible knowledge of that mysterious thing, the sea, whose secrets she shares, of that barrier through which some day they all must pass. And then they remember with a new confidence that she is herself the Star of the Sea, the Happy Gate of Heaven. Outside the whistles sound once more, and the steamers move off with a loud angry roar of escaping steam; there is a clatter of innumerable feet as the crowd rushes to the breakwater for the last farewell. But over all rises the sound of the Terrenewas singing the canticle that is peculiarly their own, and as the *Ave, Maria Stella* peals out upon the air, Our Lady of the Grand' Porte looks down and smiles with understanding.

Later still, when the month of roses has come, there is the Fête-Dieu with its processions, when a great altar is set up before her and a wonderful carpet of flowers is laid over the little square below. An oriental mat of marvellous colouring is spread the length of the streets; strange ingenious devices and symbols are wrought in petals and flowers, massed and sprinkled in a bewildering sequence, stars and crowns in daisies and marigolds, hearts in poppies, crosses and anchors and sacred monograms in exquisite roses and white lilies; everywhere along the passage of the Host is spread an indescribable carpet of sweet scents on which alone the priest who bears it may walk. And

all the length of the streets there are white hangings and crossing garlands of leaves, and banners, and everywhere roses. And upon the kneeling crowd, and the red-clad choir-boys tossing their censers and flinging rose-petals into the air, till the little square is full of them, flickering and falling; upon the great golden canopy, and the priest with the monstrance held high in his covered hands, Our Lady of the Grand' Porte looks down, and still she smiles with understanding. Perhaps she remembers that presently in August they will come again to her; and she remembers too the many times that they have so come before. It is only the faces of the kneeling crowd that change; all else goes on the same for ever.

Only a legend all that, one says; a legend that still lives and is honoured in its observance. A beautiful legend nevertheless to those who come and go, and remembering these things look up curiously at the niche in the great gate, where lights burn always about the figure that is seen dimly behind its flowers.

These are but one or two of the

stories of the streets; but one or two of the legends that have come down to us through time. There are many others. There is the House of Glass, with its hanging gardens; there are the chapels, each with its history; there are the crosses within the town and without the walls; there is the strange and simple pathos of the departure of the Terreneuvas. There is the origin of the saying "*Duc, cherche tes chiens!*" and why, at St. Malo, one must cross one's self before bathing; there is the cat's gold and silver, and the stories of the wonderful city of the Saracens at Quid-Aleth.

And, above all, year by year and season by season, there is the ever-changing life, which yet changes so little, of the town, compact within its embracing walls, set in the midst of the free air and the large sky and the purple water. Outside are the country and the wide sunlit beaches, where Paris comes with its gaiety and its laughter and its perpetual need of amusement; within, dark streets and ancient houses, a crowded neighbourliness of life, a small contented labour, and so much of the past as Time has left to us.

SOME RIDING RECOLLECTIONS.

WHEN we were boys our first lessons in riding were taken on (and off) the back of a donkey. He was a creature of changeable but, on the whole, amiable disposition. When his temper gave way before the trials to which we subjected it, we took many lessons in that gentle art of falling off which is so useful a supplement to the science of riding as more generally understood. We can make this avowal without any sense of shame now, for it happened once, on a day for ever memorable, that our donkey kicked off our riding-master himself in all his glory of boots and breeches. Joe, the coachman's boy, declared all our theory of donkey-riding to be incorrect; and it is significant that, though the donkey could kick off the riding-master, boots and breeches and all, it entirely failed to shake Joe from his seat by any of its antics. But then Joe's method was entirely different from that of the riding-master's; it was indeed so simple as scarcely to deserve the name of method, being contained in the single precept that you should sit as near the tail of the animal as possible. That was the sum total of his theory of donkey-riding, and it worked to perfection in practice. Our uncle, who was in the Navy, explained the mechanics of Joe's style of riding nautically: "It's as plain as a pike-staff," said he, "that when you've got all the weight in the stern, the craft isn't likely to go down by the head." It was at all events true as a statement of fact, however it may have been as an explanation of the principles, that the donkey did not "go down by the head" so frequently

when Joe was riding him as when we were mounted "amidships." And this going down by the head always had the same result; we went off over the head.

For a long while we were not allowed to ride with stirrups, and whether or no this was a wise provision is hard to say. It has its advantages and its disadvantages. But it is very certain that Authority was justified of its wisdom in making us ride often without bridle. The mouth of our donkey was as the nether millstone, and had we been allowed to drag on it at will our hands would inevitably have been ruined irretrievably. As it was, we learned to gallop along secure of our seat, so long as "the craft did not go down by the head," while we guided the donkey by means of a stick more or less ungently applied to one side or other of his head and neck. The first principle of good riding, we were taught, was that the seat was to be kept by the hips, knees, and balance only.

We learned the value of these precepts, which seemed at the time so much vanity and vexation, when we were promoted to the high distinction of riding a pony. Jumping Jenny was the inspiring name of this creature, and the good little lady in no way belied her designation. She was Exmoor bred, and an ideal boy's pony for a heavy banked country. Timber or water she could jump at need; but her two special points were the nimbleness with which she could climb up and down a great Devonshire bank, and her unfailing eye for a bog. She had not been brought up on Exmoor

for nothing. She knew the look of a bog far better than we knew it, and a team of elephants would scarcely have pulled her into it; certainly no boy would ever induce her to put foot into one.

She was as generous also as she was prudent. Though no consideration would make her set hoof on a real undoubted bog, she yet would face mere boggy ground in the most gallant fashion. Only once did she ever refuse a fence, and we carry in our mind still the time and place of that refusal and the overwhelming shock of astonishment it caused us. We had sent on our horses on the previous day, for the meet was some twenty miles from home. We were driven out in the morning in a dogcart by Authority, who was to ride a new horse that day, fresh to the country. The first covert drawn was a big furze brake, a sure find for foxes and woodcock, of which delectable birds we counted no less than fifteen come out at the corner where we stood awaiting the first whimper. From this covert there were several lines that the fox might take, all comparatively good except one. If he took that line we should find it, we had been told, very boggy, but the odds were some five to one against it. Nevertheless that, and none of the other four, was the line that perverse fox elected to take; and we found it, as we had been told, very boggy. Authority had the best of us all, for his horse, new to the big banks, refused the very first of them, and half a precious hour was passed in getting him over it; it was, by the way, one of our most stringent rules that if an animal once refused a fence he was to be put at it till he was over somehow, or till darkness closed the contest. In the intervals of his arguments with the new horse, Authority took a glimpse at Boyhood and Jumping Jenny growing con-

stantly more distant over a succession of banks, and noticed, as we were told afterwards, an undue elevation in the heels of Jenny after each ascent. In truth these banks were just a little higher than those to which we and Jenny were commonly accustomed and upset us a little in consequence. We pecked severely over several, but the ground was soft (a deal too soft!) and we were always up and on again, Jenny with a nose growing rapidly dirtier. Off the fifth bank the landing was terrible; Jenny was in up to the hocks, and the soft mud sucked lovingly as she drew each leg out of it. Some of the field were making play on firmer ground to the right. On the left was a big gray mare jammed tight in a ditch, while her late rider lay on his back in the soft bed of an indisputable bog. Poor Jenny was herself scarcely better than a fixture now, but there was no going back. The hounds were in front, and Devonshire fields are small. Together we struggled on, Boyhood sometimes afoot, sometimes, for a pace or two, in the saddle; Jenny was a mass of mud right up to the girths, and Boyhood equally muddy to an equal height. Still we plunged away until at length we floundered on to more solid ground close by the further bank of the field. There was now breathing-space to count-up our losses. These consisted of a broken curb-chain, the result of a particularly severe peck on Jenny's part, and a lost stirrup-leather. The latter loss was serious; but it was hopeless to attempt any search for them in that hardly-passed Slough of Despond; we were only too thankful to be out of it at such slight cost. Then we put Jenny at the low bank, beyond which was a beautifully hard high-road; anything hard looked beautiful after our late experience. To our utter amazement she would not

even offer to rise to it, but just stood stock still when she came to it. Three several times we put her at it, with spur and whip and adjuration, before we arrived at an understanding of this most extraordinary thing; and then we felt thoroughly ashamed of ourselves. Of course poor Jenny was so done by her efforts in dragging herself through that dreadful slough that she was literally incapable of rising to the fence, and we had beaten her and spurred her on that account! When we realised the position, we went near to shedding tears, of shame for ourselves and sorrow for Jenny; but in five minutes she had recovered her wind, and went over that bank like a cat.

The hounds were by this time goodness knew where; and, with the exception of goodness, the only being who knew anything at all about their doings during a great part of that run was Authority who, after succeeding in getting his horse over the bank, jumped him backwards and forwards several times before thinking about the hounds at all, and then began to look about him from the vantage post of the high-road. The road here runs along the watershed, giving a view into the lower ground on either side; and on his right he saw the hounds running hard with no one within some fields of them, and at intervals over the country a horse and rider fighting for life in a bog. He trotted along the high-road, watching the hunting hounds, and eventually, putting himself under the guidance of one of the road-riding brigade, cut off the pack, which by that time the huntsman had overtaken, by a cross lane.

Meanwhile Boyhood and Jumping Jenny, coming out on the high-road, met another very sorry fox-hunter, whose experiences had been similar, riding along it. Together we jogged in what we thought the most likely

direction, and by good luck soon fell in with the hounds and the field, the former having lost their fox and the latter being in an advanced stage of demoralisation. It seemed unlikely that more would be done that day, so we set off for a long ride home with Authority. Boyhood, after a twenty-two mile ride with only one stirrup on a dead-tired pony, was glad enough when the white bars of the turnpike gates (for there were pikes in those days) appeared through the gathering dusk to announce that he was nearly at home again.

This, was on the whole a somewhat dismal experience; but for a while at all events we had a greater delight in that hunting than in any other experience that life has ever held for us. It was, of course, the poorest kind of fun imaginable from the Meltonian's point of view; but it required nevertheless a certain amount of riding, and a certain degree of nerve in galloping up and down some very queer places. It was a country in which it was impossible to take your own line, being so intersected with what were locally called "bottoms," steep glens with a stream running through them, that it was almost necessary to follow the guidance of some one familiar with it. One of the most remarkable features about it all was the way in which great heavy fellows would follow the hounds on little Exmoor ponies no bigger than our Jenny. When they came to a bank they would jump off, send their pony over with a smack on the quarters, clamber up after, often by the aid of the pony's tail, then mount again, for the ponies would wait for them on the other side, and so on. This was a style of hunting which gave you fine opportunities of seeing the hounds at their work, though it is to be confessed that this was a very minor consideration to Boyhood, who

loved first and foremost the death of the fox, and secondly, plenty of jumping. It was not within Boyhood's philosophy that there could be any pleasure in galloping over enormous grass fields; he liked much better the Devonshire plan where the fields were small and the fences plentiful. Now and again we did get a mighty gallop over great unfenced spaces, but then there was a compensating quality of delight that made up to one for the loss of the jumping. Then one raced away over the moorland towards the blue sea, with the sniff of the salt breeze all the time in one's nostrils. They were always stout foxes, too, those that we found on the borders of the moorland and that took us straight away towards their well-known hold in the great seaward cliffs. There was one of these old fellows that we knew as well as a kelt knows a Jock Scott. We knew him by his brush, which was of a curious dusty gray, and probably he knew us and all the field and the bounds no less well. We found him always in the same covert; he stole out of it always at the same corner, gave just the same defiant wave of his brush as he settled into his stride, and went the same line, fence for fence and gap for gap, every year. After a mile or so we came to the open downs, golden with gorse-bushes in perpetual flower; but the old fox cared not a whit for the covert of the gorse-bushes, always holding on his line until he came to the cliff, where a hound or two generally fell a sacrifice on the beach below, unless the pack could be whipped off in time. At length, one year when we were beginning to be quite big boys, the old fox, sensibly grayer and dustier in the brush than last year, was viewed a mile and a half from his point and pulled down in the open within half a mile of it. His brush was one of our proudest trophies;

no interfering Diana happened to be in at the death that day to rob Boyhood of its best-deserved spoils; for though we had several other brushes and a mask or two, none had been the adornment of quite so gallant and famous a fox as this one.

No doubt we had our black letter as well as our red letter days. It happened to us once and again to be pounded; to come across a post and rails, though such obstacles were rare in our country, which Jumping Jenny, with the best heart in the world, could not negotiate. Then we had to go sadly round by a gap or a gateway, and by the time we had our heads straight again the hounds might be clean gone from sight and hearing. But this happened seldom, for Devonshire is the special happy hunting-ground of a boy on a small pony. Rider and steed of this quality are there equal to any others, and often it was a positive advantage to be able to creep through a small place in a hedge or bottom. We had hunted several times before it ever happened to us to come face to face with an obstacle in the nature of timber, and on this first occasion Jumping Jenny was more equal to the situation than her rider. Jenny landed deftly enough over the fence; but Boyhood found itself strangely dislodged from the saddle and perched on Jenny's neck in a manner at once undignified and uncomfortable. A hasty scramble back into the saddle was followed by a quick glance round to see whether the unfortunate adventure had been observed. A sardonic smile on the face of Authority was the only comment; but it was comment sufficient to make Boyhood swear in its heart that before next taking the field it would be a finished timber-jumper. In pursuance of this resolve we asked that a line of hurdles should be set up for practice on the lawn before the house. But

here Authority's acquiescence was qualified by a stringent condition: the hurdles might be put up and we might practise over them at will; but it was to be clearly understood that if Jenny refused them, as might happen in cold blood, we were to keep on putting her at those hurdles so long as the daylight lasted. We agreed, perforce, to this condition, and started, with some qualms, on the emprise. Boyhood was a trifle more cunning than Authority had expected. Authority, with the sardonic smile on his face, watched Boyhood riding down from the stables in the expectation that Jumping Jenny would be called on, then and there, to show that her title was merited. We were not quite so green as that. Our favourite reading, in this phase of our career, was the glorious and immortal history of Mr. John Jorrocks, M.F.H. Our hero of romance was Mr. James Pigg, and our very phrases were borrowed from this inspired book. Each fox we viewed as "the biggest fox whatever was seen"; our verdict on each night, as we looked out upon it from the window, was "hellish dark and smells of cheese." From so sapient a work it is impossible but that we should have picked up a certain share of cunning in matters pertaining to the horse, the hound, and the chase. Therefore, instead of bringing Jenny right down on the line of hurdles at the outgoing, we took her a little round about the lawn and into the next field first; and then, bringing her back towards the hurdles, with her head towards her stables, set her going at them in a canter, and over she hopped like a bird. Boyhood was disconcerted: the seat in the saddle was insecure for a moment, no doubt; but it had been drilled into us to sit well back, and after two or three further trials we enjoyed going over a hurdle a great deal better than

sitting in an armchair. After this no fence that we met in the hunting-field could puzzle us except, of course, those that beat us by their quantity rather than quality.

The quaintest incident that memory retains of our hunting days was the finish of a pottering run in a heavily wooded country where no fox would face the open. We had hunted him up and down the rides for the greater part of a day, and finally, with the scent at its hottest, we seemed to have lost the fox in the neighbourhood of a little cottage, with a pigstye tacked on to it. The hounds were giving tongue round the pigstye, while its occupants protested with no less noise. The hubbub was tremendous, and the tumult increased tenfold when the second whip climbed the stye palings and began to search the tenement for the missing fox. There was no sign of him. Still the hounds kept giving tongue around the dwelling as if the fox were there. The whip, after drawing the pigstye blank, knocked at the cottage door and, receiving no answer, entered. The sole inmate was a bed-ridden old woman who protested with vehemence equal to the pigs' against this invasion of her privacy; adding that no fox could possibly have come in, for the door had not been opened since her grandson had gone out to work in the morning. The man in pink was about to retire with apologies, when a bold hound burst in through the door, with a terrible burst of melody. He stopped to ask no questions of the poor old lady, but went under the bed like a tiger. More hounds dashed in; there was a scuffle and a worry under the bed, shrieks from the poor old woman that lay on it, furious death-notes of the hounds,—and in a second or two all was over. It took a deal of silver and consolation to make the lady realise that the hounds

had not killed her as well as the fox. She still protested solemnly that the fox could not have entered the cottage because the door had been shut all the time; but it was obvious enough, from the sootiness of the old fellow's coat, that his way in had been, not through the door, but down the chimney. The old lady suffered no harm; indeed, the shock and the hubbub did her a world of good. Her grandson reported afterwards that he had never known her so well and lively for years as she was for a few days after this excitement.

Another day comes back to us, the brightest of all the triumphs shared by Jenny and Boyhood. We were waiting, while hounds were drawing a big covert, on the far side from that where most of the field were watching. There was a fox at home, for the hounds threw their tongues bravely and continuously, and yet, while the greater volume of sound grew distant, it seemed that nearer at hand an echo of it still sounded in the covert. Therefore we stayed, while every nerve of Jenny's little body quivered in her excitement. Nearer and nearer came this lesser chorus until, almost beneath our nose, a fine red fox slunk stealthily out and away over the stubble before us. We waited, as we had been well warned to do, until he was a hundred yards out in the open, before crying *tally-ho* with all the force of our young lungs. At the same moment there burst from the covert two hounds, no more, hot on the scent. Larger experience might have taught us that these could be but two stragglers from the pack, that the rest were away out on the far side of the covert after another fox: larger experience might have taught us that our duty was to whip off these two errant ones and send

them back to the body of the pack; but Boyhood does not always know, or heed, its duty, and if Jenny knew better, she told us nothing. Such a run we had! Across that stubble, out over the grass field beyond, and on to a plough, only ourselves, Jenny, and those two hounds—and there they viewed the fox. They raced, and the fox, being fresh, raced too. How long he might have kept away from them one cannot say, for at the far end of that plough a stark obstacle confronted him. In that country they build the walls of their fruit-gardens of a clayish concrete, with a straw thatch on top to keep the rain out. Fruit-trees grow better on these than on any other walls, and it was one of these that our fox had before him across the plough. He went at it bravely, but the take-off was none too good. Still he clung a moment, with teeth and pads, on the thatching; then the treacherous straw gave way, and he slid scrambling down the wall. Again he went at it, but in a hurried, hustled fashion, for now the two hounds were hard on him. Again he clung a moment to the thatch, then down again he slid almost into the hounds' mouths. There was a snarl, a worry, and all was over. Boyhood, alone, with a single couple of hounds had killed a fox. With enormous labour, and much scolding, we managed to perform the obsequies with a pocket-knife, and trotted off in fine feather with the trophies, after the two hounds had munched the carcase. The errant couple followed, with sterns proudly erect, and when, later in the day, we succeeded in falling in with the rest of the field, neither the Master nor other Authority had the heart to say a word to spoil Boyhood's sense of triumph.

THE SEAT OF JUSTICE.

"It is perfectly monstrous!" said I. "This is the fourth letter I have written to Her Majesty's Office of Works on the want of a proper chair from which to dispense even-handed justice to the British public."

"My love," suggested Mrs. de Lex, "why not take one of the chairs from your study?"

I made some observation about "dangerous precedent," but Mrs. de Lex said "Stuff," in a tone which quenched argument. "Well, my dear," said I, "I'll,—I'll write to the Department." I did write, a forcible, and, I flatter myself, also an elegant letter, setting forth the discomfort of myself and my brother Justice during the long hours we were on the Bench, begging the Board to take the matter into their favourable consideration and supply the Court with a suitable seat of justice. A week passed and I received an answer from the Secretary.

1896 BOARD OF WORKS.

B
SIR,

May 27, 189-.

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 20th inst., requesting that the article named in margin may be supplied by this department, and in reply I have to inform you that I will lay the letter before the Board at their next meeting, and communicate to you their decision on the subject.

I have the honour to be, your most humble Servant, JOHN P. ROBINSON
(Secretary to the Board).

To C. de Lex, Esq.,
Police Magistrate,
S.W. District.

This, so far, was satisfactory, and I triumphantly snubbed my wife who had ventured to hint that I should find my application treated with contempt. Weeks, however, rolled away

and the decision of the Board was still unrevealed. I sent another despatch, another, and yet a third; but to none came any answer. Then I grew angry, and penned a sarcastic note. This had the desired result.

2994

No. C.
SIR,

BOARD OF WORKS.

July 28, 189-.

I have the honour, by the direction of the Board of Works, to acknowledge the correspondence cited in the margin, and to inform you in reply that the Board has given your application their full and most complete attention. The practice, however, of supplying judicial Chairs to Justices is one which has not hitherto obtained in this Department. I am directed, however, to inform you that the Board will again consider this somewhat important matter with a view to bringing it under the notice of the Right Honourable the Secretary for the Home Department at an early date.

I am further instructed to say that your sarcastic observations are not only incorrect, but considered by the Board to be quite uncalled for.

I have the honour to be, &c., JOHN P. ROBINSON.

I was staggered. What vast machinery had I not set in motion! Heaven knows I had no desire to trouble the Right Honourable the Secretary for the Home Department. I would write to him and apologise; like an ass I did so.

In three months' time I received back my letter, marked in red, in blue, and in green ink, minuted in all directions, and commented upon in all kinds of handwriting. "Noted and returned. M.P.S."—"Not on the business of this department. O.G.S."—"Refer to the Paste and Scissors Office. M.B."—"Apparently forwarded in error. L.B.O."—Across the right-

hand bottom corner of this maltreated document was written in a fine bold hand: "Communications on this subject must be made to the Rt. Honble. the Chief Secretary through the Gunnybag and Postage Stamp Department only. O.K." This was decisive, though who O.K. was, and what the Gunnybag and Postage Stamp Department had to do with seats of Justice I could not tell. I wrote again to the Board and after waiting the usual time, received the following reply:

3693

X
SIR,

BOARD OF WORKS.

October 9, 189-.

I have the honour, by the direction of the Board, to inform you that they cannot at present move in the matter named in the margin. The subject has occupied the attention of the Board for the last six months, but after mature consideration they fail to see how your request can be complied with unless by the direct authority of the Cabinet.

I am instructed to suggest that perhaps in the meantime, as the case seems urgent, and times are bad and agriculture depressed, the construction of a little platform to raise the old one to the desired height might meet the difficulty.

I have the honour to be, &c., J. P. ROBINSON.

Meet the difficulty! No, nor half of it, but I must submit. The little platform was duly constructed, and nearly cut short my career as a metropolitan magistrate; in fact this precious device was of such a dangerous nature that the Insurance Office demanded an extra premium on my life, which I may here observe, the Government has as yet shown no intention of repaying me. At length, after several accidents in taking my seat on the Bench owing to this confounded little platform, I wrote to the half-hearted Robinson. "No one but an idiot," said I, "could have made such a preposterous proposition, which has on several occasions nearly disabled my colleague and myself." The phleg-

matic creature replied after three weeks as follows.

3792

X
SIR,

BOARD OF WORKS.

November 7, 189-.

I have the honour to acknowledge your communication of the 16th ult., in which you inform me that I am an idiot, as per margin; and in reply thereto beg to inform you that on that point a difference of opinion exists in this department.

I have the honour to be, &c., J. P. ROBINSON.

This seemed to be a fatal blow to my hopes, but I wrote again, begged to withdraw the offensive expression made in the heat of the moment, and to request that the Board would condescend to take my petition into earnest consideration. Mr. Robinson replied in a temperate and forgiving spirit. "The Board," he observed, "are most desirous to comply with your request, and I am directed to state for your information that a proposal to amalgamate the votes for furniture and patent revolving beacons will be made to the Government, which amalgamation will enable the Board to issue the article as per margin. I am desired to ask if you have any suggestions to offer with regard to width, height, stuffing, &c." I could not see the point of this amalgamation, nor its bearing on my case, but I replied courteously; and at the same time I wrote to my friend O'Dowd, Member for Northam, to beg him to make a proper representation on the subject. O'Dowd, I should say, was at that time in Opposition.

My hopes ran high when, on the following Thursday, O'Dowd delivered himself of a terrific speech in which he accused the Government of the most wanton barbarity, and drew such a terrible picture of Justice as not only blind, but as likely, through the parsimony of the Government, to become also halt and maimed, that it brought tears into my eyes as I read

it. Barnstrake, however, who had kept two government-clerks at work night and day copying the correspondence, replied in his usual calm and dignified manner. O'Dowd was muzzled; but encouraged by the support of THE DAILY TRUMPETER moved for a Commission to inquire into the subject, with power to call for persons and papers.

The Commission was granted, sat at Westminster for seven mortal weeks, examined two hundred and sixty witnesses, ordered plans and specifications of all sorts of chairs from the period of the Coronation Chair to the latest design of the present day at a cost of £1,000, and finally published a report of eight hundred pages, containing a complete history of Seats of Justice from the reign of King Solomon to that of Queen Victoria.

Nothing was done during the recess, but when the House was about to meet again, THE DAILY TRUMPETER was informed that the special report on the "subject of Seats of Justice, which, we understand, will shortly be laid on the table of the House, contains some startling revelations, and proves beyond a doubt the necessity for an absolute Free-Trade policy." Forthwith into the fray rushed the Protectionist paper, and proved entirely to its own satisfaction that the only way to make mankind happy was to encourage the growth of industry by severe protective duties. "It is rumoured," said this journal, "that an effort will be made by the hardware and soft goods faction to import the two thousand Chairs of State required for the various judicial benches. Such an act would shame the cheek of modesty. We trust that a patriotic Government will look to it. We have imported too long. Our shortsighted and venal contemporary, not satisfied with importing its bruisers,

bulls, editors, and pedestrians, must needs attack the country in its most vital point, and stab it in its *seat of honour!*"

The controversy was highly interesting, but we were daily liable to become crippled for life from our little platform. I wrote to Barnstrake. That illustrious statesman replied, "that while deprecating the indiscreet haste which I had displayed in the treatment of a matter of so much importance," he was willing to do everything in his power, and after consulting with his colleagues, had given instructions to the Chief Commissioner of Police to forward a Windsor chair which would perhaps satisfy me in the meantime. No chair came, but a very large official letter from the Chief Commissioner, in which he regretted that, all the chairs of his department being in constant use, he was unable to comply with the request of the Honourable the Comptroller, but that he had forwarded my letter (forwarded to him *through* the department of the Right Hon. the Chief Secretary) to the Commander-in-Chief with a request that he would give the matter his immediate attention.

Three weeks passed, and I received a letter from the Commander-in-Chief, who in a military memorandum in red ink begged to forward me copies of the correspondence between the Hon. the Comptroller of Gunnybags, the Chief Commissioner of Police, and himself, and to attach a list of articles with which "it was in his power to supply me through the usual official channel." The list contained every article under heaven except the one I required. I wrote again to Barnstrake, and received the following answer:

Private.

DEAR DE LEX,

I don't see how to please you, but as the matter will be brought before the House

shortly, and those confounded fellows in the Opposition will be sure to make a handle of it, I have begged a personal interview with H.R.H., stated your case, and asked him, as an old friend of my cousin Lord Loft, to help me. H.R.H., in the kindest and most delicate manner, has sent me an old porter's chair, discarded, I believe, by one of the royal domestics, and placed entirely at your service. For goodness' sake, my dear fellow, keep the matter dark, for I sadly fear that so irregular a proceeding will result in some confusion in this Department.

Yours, S. B.

P.S.—I rely on your brother's powerful support in the event of a General Election.

I waited patiently till early in the following spring when the estimates were before the House. In the supplementary estimates appeared the following item: "*Comptroller of Gunnybags*. Division, 492; subdivision 8. For erecting platform on the Magistrates' Bench at——Police Court. 12s. 9d." It was thought there would be a row. The Treasurer trembled when he submitted the fatal item to the House, and an ominous silence reigned. "I would ask the Right Hon. the Treasurer," said Mr. Wiggintop, rising, "if this piece of wanton extravagance is to be paid for by the British tax-payer?" "Of course," answered a rash member from the Government benches. Wiggintop sat down, and those who knew his antipathy to Downing Street trembled for the fate of the Ministry.

The next morning THE DAILY TRUMPETER laughed bitterly. "So then, this is the way in which the British tax-payer is robbed to support the liveried myrmidons of an effete and palsied aristocracy." The Ministry at once resigned, and Wiggintop was sent for. He formed a Ministry in twenty-four hours and went to the country with the fatal chair nailed to the masthead of his future policy. "It shall be my business," said he at an enthusiastic meeting of his con-

stituents, "to see that every halfpenny of this scandalous charge is paid out of the Royal Exchequer."

When Parliament met, Wiggintop called for "all the correspondence connected with this gross case of Imperial tyranny." He did so, and, to the triumph of his Party, it was resolved by an overwhelming majority that the question should be immediately referred to the Privy Council. I imagined that all was now over; but by the next post I heard that a Royal Commission had been appointed with power to examine witnesses and call for books and papers. Of course my evidence was required, but my blood was up now and I would not shrink from my duty. I wrote to the Secretary, to the Commission, but received no answer. I waited a month and then, having primed myself with names, called in Downing Street. It was what people who read the newspapers call the silly season, and London was empty. A messenger was elegantly lounging on the steps, and to him I addressed myself. "Is Lord Loft within?" "No, his Lordship is in Greece." "Mr. Porchester Jones?" "Gone to Norway." "Mr. Washington White?" "In the South of France." "Mr. Fitz-Clarence Plantagenet?" "At Boulogne." "Good gracious," said I in despair, "is there no one to look after these four millions of London's inhabitants?" "I think you'll find a young gentleman upstairs," said the messenger carelessly.

I went upstairs, and after some investigation found the young gentleman who looked after the Department. He was a very spruce and very small young gentleman, with a flower in his coat and a glass in his eye. He stared at me as I entered as though to say, "What the deuce do you mean, coming into a Government Office in this way?"

"Mr. Cackleby Smallpiece, I believe?" said I.

"Quite so, what can I do for you?"

"I have called about the Police Court Chair Commission."

"Ah! door B., first on the right, third turning to the left,—not here,—mistake."

"Pardon me, sir, I have called there and they referred me to you."

"Oh, did they? Ah, well, what is it?"

"I wrote some time ago to Mr. Washington White who acts as Secretary to the Commission."

"What Commission?"

"The Police-Court-Chair-Commission."

"Oh, ah! Is there such a thing? Quite so,—didn't know,—beg your pardon,—go on."

"My name is De Lex, Police Magistrate at ——— Police-Court."

"All right, De Lex, sit down. So you are the Police Magistrate at L—— Court?"

"Yes, the L—— Court."

"Oh, ah, yes! Stupid of me, but the L's are not in my Department, don't you see? I take the B's; but however, never mind,—I dare say we shall get on. You want to see White?"

"Well, no," said I, "I want to know——"

"Hadn't you better put it in writing, De Lex? Put it in writing now."

"There's no occasion for that; I have already written to Mr. White."

"Ah!" says the young gentleman, at once relieved. "Why didn't you say so before? Tomkins, bring me Mr. White's letter-book."

Tomkins brought it, and Mr. Smallpiece perused it. "You must be under a mistake, De Lex; there's no letter mentioned here."

"But I wrote one, sir," I ventured to remark.

"I rather think *not*, De Lex. You must be in error, De Lex."

"But, my dear sir——"

"But *my* dear sir, the thing's as plain as a pikestaff. We register all our letters, of course; now there is no letter registered *here*, so we couldn't have received one. Don't you see?"

"Perhaps it might have escaped you," I hesitated again.

He smiled a patronising smile: "My dear Mr. de Lex, our system of registration is perfect, simply perfect; it couldn't have escaped us."

Just then the door was burst open, and there entered another gentleman with a letter in his hand. "Hullo!" said Smallpiece quite unabashed. "Here it is! Egad, that's strange! Thanks, my dear Carnaby, thanks. Now, sir [to me severely as if I had been in fault], perhaps you can explain your business."

A bright idea struck me; I would inquire as to the probable result of my inquiries. "That letter, sir, fully explains my business. May I ask you what will become of it?"

"Become of it? It is the property of the office, sir."

"But what will be done with it?"

"It will go through the usual official course, I presume," said Mr. Smallpiece.

"And what is that, may I ask?"

"Oh," said the young man, waving the letter as he spoke, "Mr. White will hand it to Mr. Paget, who will minute it and send it on to Mr. Jones. He will pass it through his Department, and then it will in the usual official course reach Mr. Secretary Sandwich; he will send it to the Commissioners."

"Oh, and what then?"

"Well, the Commissioners will have it read and entered in their minutes, and then, unless they choose

to send it to the Privy Council, they will return it to us in the usual course."

"As——"

"From Mr. Secretary Sandwith to Mr. Jones, from Mr. Jones to Mr. Paget, from Mr. Paget to Mr. White, from Mr. White to me."

"And what would you do with it?"

"I should hand it to the Chief," said Mr. Smallpiece.

"And what would become of it then?"

Mr. Smallpiece admired his boot gloomily, and said at last: "'Pon my life, De Lex, I don't know. The Chief is rather absent and, between ourselves, when once a document gets into his hands, 'gad, there's no telling *what* he may do with it."

"Sir," said I in a rage, "I wish you good morning."

"Good morning, De Lex," said Mr. Smallpiece with perfect affability; "anything more we can do

for you, you know, delighted, I'm sure."

I did not pause to ask what would become of my letter in the alternative of the Commission choosing to hand it to the Privy Council, but left the office. Outside were some thirty or forty of the cloud of witnesses. "Ha, ha!" they laughed. "Here is Mr. de Lex; he can tell us all about it. Where is the Commission, De Lex? We've been all over London looking for it."

"Gentlemen," said I, "it may be in the moon for all I know of it. If I don't go home and go to bed, I shall be a subject for Bedlam."

I am waiting still. The Commission is still sitting, I suppose, for I hear at intervals of the wonderful progress they are making with the vast mass of interesting evidence which somebody will have the honour to transmit to me in the usual official course. But if ever I write to the Department again may I——!

A GREAT ENGLISH CHRONICLE.

NEXT in value to the inheritance which a modern Englishman possesses in the great body of his literature, is, perhaps, his inheritance in the varied architecture of his fair, and, on the whole, very fortunate island. But while England's written chronicle from Bede and Alfred belongs to the race at large, and equally to every branch of the widely scattered English family, her chronicle in stone, and in the humbler materials of brick and mortar, is the peculiar heritage of the home-keeping Briton. Freely circulating wherever the race and language have spread, the one is as readily accessible in San Francisco or Melbourne as in London or Edinburgh; the other, although in a valid sense an inheritance of the race as a whole, is not, for obvious reasons, capable of the same world-wide diffusion. Like Luther's Bible, this chronicle is a chained book.

In the present instance the undeniable privilege of possession is tempered by some responsibility. It is true that of late years this fact has received a certain amount of recognition, and that the more splendid pages of the architectural volume are just now somewhat effectually cared for and likely to be preserved at least to immediate posterity. But while the ivy-covered fortress and ruined abbey are sedulously propped, and the baronial hall, the cathedral, and the venerable parish church more or less judiciously renovated, other important regions of architecture are less fortunate. It is in the great commercial and manufacturing centres, and in the villages clustering about them (or which once clustered about them), that the most

hopeless ruin perhaps is wrought. Here, and in the picturesque High Streets and old-world squares and market-places of the elder towns, the "grim wolf," not of war or famine, but of peace, plenty, and universal increase, "daily devours apace"—now swallowing up a fine old Elizabethan hall, now a mansion of the seventeenth or eighteenth century with its grounds, now a whole row of quaint half-timbered cottages, now a pleasant farm-house, now an ancient inn; and all this not with "privy paw," like the Popish wolf of Milton, but openly and before our waking eyes. The changes in the outward face of English towns and villages, the havoc and general obliteration which this well-fed, but insatiable monster has wrought in the last fifteen or twenty years, are greater probably than in any similar period since he began his ravages.

Close and many are the links of association which bind our history, poetry, drama, and fiction, that is to say, our national life, to the pages of this ancient architectural record. Almost every picture from the earliest which our poetry calls forth, has a background in native architecture. Caedmon sings his CREATION in the hall of a Northumbrian monastery. Chaucer's light-minded company, "from every shire's end of England," meet at a London inn before their final journey to the Cathedral City. Castles, courts, dungeons, palaces, country houses and town houses, streets and inns, along with camps, battlefields, and enchanted forests, fill the pages of the great Elizabethans; Shakespeare

especially abounds in palaces and taverns. Their themes may carry us to France, Italy, Greece, Rome, or the ends of the universe, for the imaginations of the old dramatists knew no bounds; but we make these magnificent excursions through the doors of old English playhouses, and between the projecting gables of old English streets. So, too, in the period of Milton and the Puritans. We cover vast ranges of spiritual geography, celestial and infernal, but the great visionary himself is corporeally lodged for the most part in such homely precincts as Bread Street, Fleet Street, Aldersgate Street, Barbican, and Jewin Street. Again leaving that troubled time, with the makers of mundane history busy at the congenial task of smashing painted windows and mural sculpture, and bombs, "like mad evil spirits," invading even the repose of cathedral aisles,—and coming to the milder age of Addison, we find the polite periwigs of that polished era translating Homer, and writing their neat essays on Man, Immortality, and the Pleasures of the Imagination, amid the familiar environment of London coffee-houses, and under the shadow of the resurgent St. Paul's and the new churches of Wren. As we approach still nearer to our own day, the links of this connection become even closer, from the more direct and picturesque treatment which architecture begins to receive. Somewhat early in the last century, Thomas Gray, a Cambridge scholar of repute, set the seal of his exquisite genius on the ivy-crowned church and yew-shadowed churchyard of rural England, with all the images, sentiments, and associations which gather round them; in one fortunate poem preserving for all time to the dispersed Anglo-Saxon tribes of America, India, Africa, and Polynesia, the most perfect picture ever yet limned of the most beautiful, most harmonious,

most pathetic, and at the same time the commonest object in the moralised English landscape. A little later arose the great-hearted Wizard of the North. To him probably more than to any other writer is due the revived, or rather perhaps the first created, popular interest in the feudal relics of Great Britain, which dates from about the beginning of the present century. Taking under his especial guardianship, along with the mountains and streams of his beloved Scotland, all the castles, abbeys, priories, ancient halls, manors, and moated granges of this island, in what state of repair soever, he made them beautiful, filled them with the brilliant company we all know, or should know, and informed them with a vivid life and interest which they might never have possessed but for the magic of his wand. Then followed the great and famous company of modern English writers whose line has gone out into all the earth. With them—the poets, historians, novelists, and essayists of the early and middle part of the century, who made the life of modern, or relatively modern English people, familiar wherever English books are read—grew up a new order of interest and association. The architectural background here is that of the busy, prosperous England of the early steam-age; the age of the new railways with their embankments, bridges, and stations; of suburban villas (detached and semi-detached) twenty and thirty instead of four or five miles from town; of the cotton-spinners', iron-masters', and railway kings' new country seats; of the summer tourist, and the new seaside and mountain hotels; of Yorkshire mills made as interesting as Yorkshire monasteries by the genius of Brontë, and London streets of the Victorian age made as delightful as those of the Elizabethan age by the

genius of Dickens. Of Barchester Towers, Gatherum Castle, Framley Parsonage, Shepperton Church, and Locksley Hall,—of Bleak House, the White Horse Inn, Boffin's Bower, and the other side of Goswell Street.

This is the pleasant, complex, new and old picture of the face of mid-century England, which, aided by the already too profuse arts of illustration, went forth into Greater Britain with the names of Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Tennyson, George Eliot, and Charlotte Brontë. But it is already a fading picture; for now succeeds our own absorbing epoch, with its own galaxy of geniuses, who though eminently worthy shall for the present be nameless; and with its own achievements in the builder's art, whereof more anon.

It would of course be idle to speak of the worth to the nation at large, and to the scattered portions of the English, or rather the British, household, of the more splendid pages of the architectural chronicle; of the mediæval and feudal pages especially. Their worth, though not so universally admitted as many suppose, is now generally recognised, and, as we have said, they are likely, with embellishments and additions of our own, to be handed down in a fair state of preservation to a grateful and appreciative posterity. But the worth of the humbler pages,—the secular, civic, domestic pages—is not so widely recognised; and their chance of being preserved for the enjoyment of future generations is considerably less. Yet these humbler pages form not only the bulk, but also in some respects, the more important portions of the book; for it is almost needless to say that the comparatively few great or remarkable buildings of a country do not determine the character of its architecture so much as the broad and common features of

the street and the roadside, of the town, village, and hamlet, which meet us at every turn. And it is just these which make, or once made, the peculiar felicity of English scenery; which fill out and complete the picture whose central objects are the castle and the cathedral, the princely country seat and the rich mediæval parish church. It is these common features, along with the unmatchable freshness and delicacy of the English landscape, which have been the delight of poets and the encomium of travellers. From Miss Mitford to Mr. Ruskin, from Washington Irving to Nathaniel Hawthorne and M. Taine, there has been no diversity of opinion as to their charm. No fairer homes can be found in fiction than those which are drawn in *OUR VILLAGE*; none in what is called real life than those which are, or were, to be seen in the "lowland hamlets of Beddington and Carshalton," the defilement of whose pleasant waters is lamented in the *CROWN OF WILD OLIVE*. The native compares shire with shire, the stranger compares them with his own country, and both with an increasing appreciation of their manifold merits. Where elsewhere, in the Anglo-Saxon world at least, can be found such lovely old town and country houses? Where such incomparable old inns and cottages, such picturesque farm-houses, barns, and gateways? Where elsewhere such delightful old High Streets, such pleasant old-world squares and market-places? The tourist is drawn by the far-famed castle and minster, and discovers their common and secular environment to be equally surprising. Warwick is as interesting as its fortress; Canterbury and Winchester are as wonderful as their cathedrals; the closes of Norwich, Lichfield, and Salisbury, are as beautiful as the spires that overshadow them. To say truth,

this frigid northern islet of Britain, which but for the amiable influence of the Gulf Stream would probably be nothing but another Labrador or Newfoundland, is, and has long been, a heaped up storehouse of natural and architectural as well as historical treasures; of places and things "too fair to be looked upon but only on holidays," and on golden sunshiny holidays in May or June, which live in happy memory. Truly, oh strong Mother of many strong peoples, thy former children built for thee beautifully and well in the old days! But unless thou look to it thy latter progeny will undo the work of their fathers.

Of course this is the bright side, the holiday side. We know well that there are, and have long been, grimy towns as well as gracious towns, black counties as well as beautiful counties. But such things must be in the home of a strenuous and active people. A good workman is known by his chips, and the same is true of a working nation. England is emphatically a working, a toiling nation; and her grimy towns and black counties are merely the chips, the inevitable parings and filings, thrown off in the multiplicity of her virtuous labours. Nor are these work-places necessarily ugly; but even when they are ugly, undeniably and deeply ugly, they possess the unique interest of ugliness, and the interest also of anti-thesis. The steeped towns would lose half their charm were it not for their sharp contrast to the chimneyed towns. It is not the chimneys, the smoke, the blackness, in their proper place, which mar the holiday picture; it is when the grimy town overlaps and swallows up the gracious town, park, or neighbourhood; this is the particular abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, against which the feeble critic raises his voice.

The ravages of our demon of prosperity (it might be writ of democracy)

are most observable, as we have said, in the wide tract of architecture between the cottage home and the stately home,—or rather in the tract including both. A slight study of his modes of action shows them to be generally modes of destruction pure and simple, and modes of bad or inharmonious building; or of the two modes combined. This latter form of action is sufficiently familiar to us, being chiefly seen in the suburbs of large cities, where a good many, if not most of us, have to live. How complete in many cases this destructive and reconstructive process is, obliterating all former landmarks, many know to their cost; and also in these latter times how rapidly it is carried on. The semi-rural dwellings of earlier generations with their ampler gardens, shrubberies and lawns, seem to be the most tempting prey of the devourer, who has also an especially keen tooth for historic houses and their grounds. The rapidity with which a pleasant domain of this latter kind is transmuted into close lines of tenements and shops, or minute villas of ludicrously uniform pattern, can be paralleled only by the speed with which the jungle swallowed up the wicked native village in Mr. Kipling's tale. Only here it is not "letting in the jungle," but letting in London, Manchester, or Birmingham. But although this phenomenon has become so familiar that we now hardly notice it, and commonly accept it as the inevitable result of commercial prosperity, our demon is the very genius of increase; its effect, with but few exceptions, is the degradation of architecture. All good architecture by general admission is of slow, or at least of moderately slow, growth.

There is na workman
That can bothe worken well and hastilie,
This must be done at leisure parfaitlie,—

and there is nothing leisurely now in the growth of English and American cities. This particular form of building activity, however, though bad enough where it is operative, is less hurtful to the broader aspects of architecture than certain others, being confined to the greater business and manufacturing centres, which, though of importance, are after all, but a part of the whole; and its erections, also, are seldom permanent, as these small tenement and villa tracts are often, as if by Nemesis, swept away themselves after a short life by factories, public works, and large commercial buildings.

More widespread and lasting by far, and more serious because almost impossible of remedy, is the injury done in the gracious towns themselves. By this we mean the gradual, but none the less sure, effacement of the peculiar features which make, or once made, them, not merely old-world and interesting, but also distinctively native and English. Fortunately in most of the cathedral and abbey towns, and in other smaller towns of which we may speak, the progress of this effacement is comparatively slow; its movement, however, can be easily seen, and its ultimate result predicted with a degree of certainty. And in most cases the result would probably be this: that while the more important features,—the cathedrals, abbey, and parish churches, with our own additions and embellishments—would remain, with the more noted secular buildings, such as the old hospitals and a few specimens of the early overhanging gables,—the wider architectural features,—the indescribable felicities of the old corners, the quaint groupings of chimneys, roofs, and gables, the happy combinations of form and colour—which make the present charm of many of the old streets and squares, would disappear, and their place be taken by architec-

ture of a wholly different kind. That is, while the monumental and famous edifices would be more carefully propped and preserved than ever, the towns themselves would be gradually rebuilt and modernised. But this, it will be said, is exactly what has always been going on. The ecclesiastical and other famous structures have stood with but slight alteration, while in the towns which surround them one type of building has succeeded another since the beginning; and the happy variety of new and old which we now see is the fortuitous result. But unluckily for the continuance of this ideal development, the buildings which are just now taking the place of the old, in too many instances give no possible hope of future picturesqueness, indeed forbid the hope. This is not because they are different from anything that went before: the various successions of the earlier periods were often that; but because they have no affinity with their surroundings, and can never be harmonised with them. Some of the many new types,—those for example with the Mansard and other forms of modern Continental roof and ornament—are exotics in England, and have always since their importation been at war with the elements of the architecture of the country and smaller provincial towns; much more opposed even than the old classical importations, some of which may be said to have become in a manner naturalised. Other types are equally at variance from being bad in themselves; a notable case in point being the now very prevalent one, which, with nothing else in common with Gothic, adorns, or covers itself with its features, lancet windows, clustered columns, decorated capitals, and the like—to such an extent that it may be styled the order of ecclesiastical hotel and cathedral villa. Still another type belonging to the same category of intrinsic badness,

is merely the order of profuse and purposeless ornament laid on as if with a trowel. This, indeed, seems to be the bane of modern domestic architecture,—minute, elaborate, heaped-up decoration. "We must run glittering like a brook in the open sunshine or we are unblest." Plain living, so far as the exterior of our houses is concerned, if not high thinking, is no more, and will be no more while the prevailing architect believes that decoration is synonymous with beauty and its absence with the reverse. Besides these, certain abnormal developments of the bastard Queen Anne style might be named; and here and there one may discern symptoms of the sky-scraper structures of New York, and newer London, as yet, however, mere pigmies by comparison, sky-scrappers, as it were, in the bud. But the subject is trite, and the multiplication of unfortunate modern instances is superfluous and unprofitable.

It is, therefore, a relief to turn to the many admirable examples of purely modern building,—examples good in themselves and in complete harmony with the older environment—which are to be found in the towns in question, and also in the country. These sufficiently prove the possibility of handing down the architectural succession in a line of almost unbroken excellence; and prove also that the bad instances just cited are not an absolutely necessary product of our time and conditions. But there is another factor in good building besides felicity of design, which we are told can no longer be counted on. This is the human factor; the old "village workman who knew all kinds of work and built in unconscious, simple picturesqueness," and to whom the older building owes its admirable and enduring qualities. At what precise period he became extinct we know not;

but although his homely art probably began to decline two hundred or more years ago, we are disposed to think it was not finally crushed out by the all-pervading power of machinery until about thirty years since, for up to the latter date evidences of its existence are to be found. It is unquestionable, however, that he is extinct now, and that the common craftsman of to-day if left to himself will not build in unconscious, simple picturesqueness, but in exactly the reverse manner; hence the too well-grounded fear for the future of permanently good architecture.

"My godmother lived in a handsome house in the clean and ancient town of Bretton," says Lucy Snowe in *VILLETTE*. We have long been trying to find this delectable Bretton, and its "handsome house" with "clear, wide windows looking down on a fine antique street, where Sundays and holidays seemed always to abide;" and although we are not yet certain of the identity of either, we believe the town to be one of the smaller country or market towns, which, though not presided over by cathedral or abbey, may yet be called "gracious." These smaller English towns, with many others that have neither court nor market, form a pleasant if not indispensable chapter of the architectural volume. They have, or should have, at least one very gray and ancient parish church with spire, or tower, seen from afar; a goodly grammar school of King Edward's, or some respectable later foundation; a picturesque manor house; and a circulating library. The centre of the whole system, however, if one may so speak, is the High Street. In this "fine antique" thoroughfare, besides the grammar school and the library, are, or should be, one or two ancient inns and posting houses,—a Blue Boar or a Green Dragon; the sleepy country bank, the post-office,

the shops; and, either in or near it, a score or so of old brick, stucco, or stone, dwellings of the type of the handsome house in VILLETTE. They are not always very old, these houses, most of them having been built, as we surmise, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty years ago; and hence they belong to the order of modern, or middle-age, antiquity. But although very plain in the matter of ornament,—often indeed without any other than their immaculate curtains, bow-pots, and clambering vines—they are in many cases serenely beautiful, and put wholly out of countenance the more elaborately-tricked mansions of to-day. And besides their intrinsic charm they have another interest. For in them, and in such towns as these, lived, moved, and had their being, no small number of those illustrious personages of modern, or relatively modern, fiction, whose fame as we said, has gone out into all the earth. Middlemarch was such a town as this; Mr. Pecksniff dwelt in one of these houses; Lilly Dale in another, and better; in these ancient inns sojourned Pickwick the immortal, and his philosophic followers; the inspired young curates and vicars of Dr. Macdonald ministered, and may yet minister, in these gray churches; here lived Adam Bede, Amos Barton, Mr. Gilfil, the repentant Janet, and the evangelical Mr. Tryon, the elder Pendennis, Dr. Thorne, Mr. Crawley—the names would fill a book. And besides these, there is, perhaps,

an equally delightful host still waiting in the limbo of unwritten fiction who may one day come forth and inhabit these pleasant mansions. Hence on more than one account, the regret that these smaller towns, like the larger ones we have mentioned, should be invaded by the spoiler,—that these beautiful old English houses should ever be supplanted by the French roof, the cathedral villa, and the much adorned nondescript.

But we are told that such things must be after our famous victories in science, mechanics, and commerce; we must bear the penalty of the resultant ugliness. Perhaps not; with the bane is found also the antidote. Our very activities may, and do, sharpen our perception both of excellence and of its pernicious contrary. We may yet awake to the fact that these humbler pages of our national chronicle are in their degree as worthy to be preserved as the more splendid ones. And when it has finally dawned upon us that the old streets and houses which so charm the home-turning Americans, and which are beginning to interest the Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders, are after all a valuable part of our common architectural heritage, we may perhaps not waste and destroy them so wantonly as we do. Only the awakening must not be too long deferred; for the grim wolf gnaws steadily, and once lost they will not be easily restored.

MADEMOISELLE DACQUIN.

FRENCHWOMEN have always played a part in the history of their country's literature, but comparatively seldom through the writing of books. The poets and authors among them have worked on an equality with men and charmed their generation, but they have often sacrificed personal influence to their talent and labour. On the other hand the women whose names survive longest have often subordinated their literary instincts to the interests of their salon and conversation, or of their friendships and correspondence. In our own century we can cite Mme. de Beaumont, Mme. de Custine, and Eugénie de Guérin, among women who gave abundant proof of the faculty for writing, and who left only journals and letters; Eugénie de Guérin's pen was devoted exclusively to a brother of genius. These are the feminine names longest remembered in France. The novelists are often strangely forgotten; the letter-writers make landmarks for the critics of all time; their names appear again and again, and seem to form a family with long descent.

We are reminded of this family by the recent death in Paris of Mdlle. Jenny Dacquin, whose name will always be identified with a literary friendship. The greatest reserve, almost a mystery indeed, was always maintained about her personality; but in April, 1892, she made herself known finally in *L'INTERMÉDIAIRE DES CHERCHEURS*, the French publication answering to *NOTES AND QUERIES*, as the owner and publisher of the famous *LETTRES À UNE INCONNUE* written by Prosper Mérimée. Mdlle. Dacquin

was a woman of wide culture, and it was a terrible threat held over her by Mérimée that she would one day write a book. But she never did so; she served literature in another way, the way of friendship, which depends also on the pen; only we shall never see her letters which called forth Mérimée's. In this Magazine it was lately pointed out how much the publication of the *LETTRES À UNE INCONNUE* had done for his memory.¹ It had become the fashion in France to regard the subtle critic and fastidious man of letters as a monster without human feelings, a despiser of women, a hater of children, above all, an Anglomaniac and a flatterer at St. Cloud in the last days of the Empire,—traits especially hateful to the French after the downfall. His death had taken place in the midst of the great tragedy. It was scarcely noticed; but the *LETTRES À UNE INCONNUE*, published in 1873, revived an interest in him which is alive at this day.

Mdlle. Dacquin died in last March at 35 Rue Jacob, where she had lived for forty-three years. She was a lover of English literature, the friend of Englishwomen, and, though she wrote no book, it seems possible at this day to find in her character the notes of a true literary life free from that which oftenest mars it, the passion for celebrity. She was born about 1814, the daughter of a country solicitor of high standing at Boulogne, who lost his fortune but preserved an honourable name. If we would believe our fathers, Boulogne sixty years ago was very different from the Boulogne of

¹ PROSPER MÉRIMÉE, November, 1895.

our day, and French society, to which English people were then sometimes admitted in Paris and elsewhere, there presented a tone and a cultivation unknown at this day in provincial towns. However this may be, it is recorded that Mdlle. Dacquin was witty, vivacious, and mature at the age of twenty in this society, and that her education was completed with great care. We are not, however, called upon to give Boulogne credit for a culture which Taine afterwards described as "composite," and Mérimée spoke of as "summing up for him more or less a whole civilisation." She had corresponded a year or two with Mérimée when he thus wrote.

M. Dacquin's family consisted of his daughter Jenny, and two sons. One of them died young but full of promise; the other was a distinguished officer in the French army, with whom Jenny lived in close and affectionate relationship till his death, and whose wife and daughter formed her family circle until her own death. After her father's loss of fortune she went to England as companion to Lady M——, and it was from England, about 1831, that she posted her first letter to Mérimée. She had been reading a novel by the rising writer called *UNE CHRONIQUE DU RÈGNE DE CHARLES IX.*, and amused herself by sending her reflections to the author under the name of an English lady, on scented note-paper stamped with a coronet. The reflections were to the point. Mérimée addressed a courteous answer to "Lady A. Seymour" in an English country house. A correspondence followed. We need not ask at what point Mérimée began to discover his favourite form of adventure, a feminine intrigue. All we know is that years passed, and they were still corresponding unknown to each other; but the mask

had long been forgotten; the reality was something that enchanted him; there was no Lady Seymour, only a French girl with a strange capacity for falling in with his intellectual whim, but who eluded closer knowledge and mystified him in a thousand ways. Only after great difficulty and much persuasion he obtained permission to visit his mysterious correspondent, when on a visit to London in December, 1840. He found a woman with raven hair, a face powerful with vitality if not with beauty, black eyes which we know to have been full of radiance and vivacity, but which he pleased himself at all times by calling *wicked*; a Southerner among Southerners but conforming to the social standards of the Northerners he liked best. Lady M—— received Mérimée in England and remained his friend until her death in 1862. Mdlle. Dacquin was the woman he was looking for. He was forty; he had had deep experience of women in society and also of those on whom its doors are shut; all his souvenirs were unsatisfactory except one, as he told Ampère subsequently when they were travelling in Greece, and that was a French girl in England, for whom he picked a flower at Thermopylæ. In her he found the friend, the elective affinity, as he tells her suddenly in after life, in the midst of a discourse on the new crinoline. She was no bluestocking, but she cared for intellectual things with an epicurean appetite perhaps unknown to the bluestocking. The caviare of intercourse with Mérimée was worth more to her than domestic happiness; and this was an all important point to him, who, like Swift in this one respect if not in several others, was in love but did not wish to marry.

The author of *UNE CHRONIQUE DU RÈGNE DE CHARLES IX.* was a figure likely to occupy a woman's imagina-

tion. Under a cold exterior, with the manners of diplomacy (like Lord Clarendon's whom, it was said, Mérimée imitated,) and a reserve of which he carried the secret engraved on a ring, *Remember to beware*, he had sensibilities displayed only to a few, and a strong need for the affection of women, which made him almost pathetic in his lonely life, spent between dim country towns where he was perpetually at work on archaeology, and his mother's apartments in Paris, where his cats and a little favourite owl were his solace. Fame came to him amidst revolutions political and literary. He was the enemy of all inflation, a despiser of his own day, a lover of Shakespeare whom he knew as well as he did Aristophanes, Rabelais, and Cervantes; eager for fresh observation in his friends and to see through their eyes, and thus far inconsistent with his motto; but his inconsistencies helped perhaps more than all else to make him the interesting friend that he remained for more than thirty years. From the time of their meeting in London, as Academician, as Senator, as Court favourite, Mérimée never failed Jenny Dacquin.

About 1835 Mdlle. Dacquin was left a very small fortune by a friend. Her father was dead and she was enabled to settle in Paris with her mother. The only restraint that ever seems to fall upon Mérimée's letters is just at this time, when he makes up his mind that after the French fashion she will marry, being now mistress of a dowry, however small. This danger was minimised, however, by comparisons: "*Il n'avait pas plus de distinction que mon bonnet de nuit*," she said of one of her suitors; and in 1842 Mérimée seems to have met her in Paris every day. Sometimes it was at a box at the opera which he sent her; or it would be an archaeological rendezvous in the environs of Paris, during

the time of lilacs or when the chest-nut-shells covered the ground. Now began the romance of Mdlle. Dacquin's life, ever associated with the bright days of her first life in Paris. "You may well love Paris," Mérimée wrote to her in calmer years. "Where would you find outside of it such walks, such alleys, such museums as those where we have had so many things to say to each other, and so many tender things?" Correspondence was unremitting between all these meetings, and we have the history of them in notes written before or after the walk, or the pilgrimage to some shrine of antiquity. Her situation at this time was neither more nor less independent than that of an Englishwoman of thirty of our own day living alone with her mother. At the theatre she was accompanied by her brother. In all early years of intercourse it is clear that Mdlle. Dacquin had one plan and Mérimée another. He, as we have said, did not wish to marry; she would take no other view of love than that it led to marriage; but she had gauged the situation from the first and only wished to retain his friendship. Hence came endless reproaches on his part, which ring at times so bitterly that some readers of the Letters may think that Mérimée was sincerely unhappy, and that she was cruel and cold. But he had given her a broad, general rule to go by in one of his letters at the outset of the correspondence: "How is it that the men who are the most indifferent are the most loved?" She had reason to believe that it was so also with the women. It was he himself who had assigned her the part of dry and austere coquetry, which she learned to play with such perfection, and which was so effective in establishing the tender friendship that followed the storm and stress of the early life in Paris; a period which lasted, it must be allowed,

for some ten years. There were times when nothing but walks in the most secluded alleys of the Bois de Boulogne would satisfy Mérimée; at others the statues of the Louvre were the most congenial influence. He was completely without reserve; she erected barriers impenetrable even to the author of *VENUS D'ILLE* and *ARSÈNE GUILLOT*, who knew everything about women of all ages of the world, and maintained scruples which the disciple of all the Encyclopedists could not break down. He had found his match in cleverness, and, disappointed and cruelly wounded, as he often was, in his sensibilities, she had succeeded in her great aim of becoming necessary to him.

On his election to the Academy in 1854 a ticket for the ladies' gallery formed the subject of several notes, and, as usual after a meeting, reproaches followed. The complaint this time was her having refused to see what he sent her, in full sight of the literary dignitaries, a kiss from the tips of his fingers. Those who remember Jenny Dacquin will not at all agree with M. Filon in his biography of Mérimée that this was the turning-point of her life, and that she must then and there have renounced all idea of sharing the honours that were now falling to Mérimée's name. There is abundant proof that she realised after the first encounters that marriage was no necessity to him, and at the same time that he required devotion in friendship. The sacrifice once made, she was not likely to go back to vain regrets. Close and intimate as were her friendships with women all through this time, no confidant ever received the outpourings of disappointment. Her vigorous individuality was full of independence; she never broke the reserve which was the guarantee for the duration of the intimacy, and it was never discussed in society.

Moreover she had infinite resources apart from him; a wide capacity for friendship, that innate love for intellectual interests of which we have already spoken, a strong taste for travel, for pictures, for music, although she neither played, sang, nor drew. She was not personally ambitious; she never had a salon. Mérimée, who did not believe in the friendship of men when the question of celebrity came in, could feel to the end that in the Rue Jacob his companionship was loved for its own sake, and not as the advertisement of a lady lion-hunter. Her life to its close was consecrated to family affection, and the love of children found its place in it.

To return to that hand-kissing at the Academy which Mdlle. Dacquin would not see; it was no special crisis. Readers of the Letters will remember how imperceptibly came the changes which brought calm into his friendship, and in 1858 we find him writing: "You know that you can command me anything; what is your pleasure?" This was fourteen years after he became an Academician.

"Why did Mérimée not marry Jenny Dacquin?" Only last year his biographer, M. Filon, put this question once more, and answered it in this wise: "Because he was under the power of two women, his mother and Madame——" It is not necessary to ask how much Mdlle. Dacquin knew of Mérimée's past. He was in the meridian of life when she as a girl found herself the recipient of his best wit and friendship. She had a fund of calm and strength in her character with all her southern vivacity, and she was content to ignore much in this world. "*Je ne sais que jouer et rêver,*" is the sentence of hers quoted in the Letters which best represents her. "She had thrown her life into a young girl's venture," writes the sympathetic author of

MÉRIMÉE ET SES AMIS. "She did not withdraw it; she might have consoled herself in marriage; she preferred her liberty and her souvenirs. Literary history owes her a place among the friends of celebrated men. Sometimes bizarre, sometimes stubborn, slightly précieuse, full of wiles, but tender, pure, and at bottom sincere, it is thus that I read her." It is thus she was known to her English friends.

As we read the Letters with all their pretty tenderness and vivid glancing at things fresh, intimate, and simple in the midst of the almost crushing civilisation of Paris, we cannot but be reminded in several points of the journal to Stella. There was the secluedness in Jenny Dacquin's life of which we have spoken, and which imparts its fragrance to the Letters as it does to the Journal. Then she and Mérimée, it may be said, had their "little language" understood by each other. "*Maraquita de mi alma*; I should like to have watched your face as you wrote that sentence in your letter. *Amigo de mi alma*; say that when you want to look agreeable, as our ladies repeat prunes and prism." Sometimes love makes him poetical. "We have had imperial hunts every day," he writes from Fontainebleau; "and the Empress has had picnics on the grass. I am melancholy, and should like to walk with you in the forest and talk of things of fairyland."

Mérimée often drew the portrait of Jenny Dacquin. His father was Léonor Mérimée, a well-known artist, and Prosper is described as living pencil in hand and drawing always as he talked. The slightest sketch from his hand on letters or scraps of paper were treasured by his friends. The walls of Mademoiselle Dacquin's drawing-room were covered with his water-colour landscapes. They showed

no touch of genius, but were correct and elegant sketches, representing very blue seas, Algerian and Italian lines of coast, the superficial finish of 1830. He would have held in horror the realistic school, the école sincère of to-day in painting, though as a writer he had a fastidious realism of his own. He never satisfied himself with his likenesses of Mdle. Dacquin, which he kept stored in portfolios. Six months after his death, before these or some of his valuable antiquities had been moved from his rooms, the Commune lit its fires in his quarter of Paris, and all he left was burned. It was a fortuitous chance which destined Mérimée's rooms to the same fate as that of the palace of the Empress Eugénie, his lifelong friend.

In the general destruction, change, and neglect which followed France's great cataclysm, we can fancy what a human impulse made Mdle. Dacquin gather together the letters of thirty-five years and finally decide to publish them in 1873. She had never frittered away her experience in conversation; yet her conscious aim had been fulfilled in having preserved Mérimée's intercourse to the end. She would not let its pleasure die with her, and she committed her secret to the public in one great confidence. The Letters proved Prosper Mérimée to have been a true Frenchman (although he was dressed by an English tailor) participating to the last in the life of France, refusing to the last to believe in her fall. If he had been satirical about his countrymen in their prosperity, and annoyed them by praising everything English, the Letters yielded them much comfort in the shape of satirical criticism on his beloved islanders written from their own country seats. He was known to have been a libertine, of an old-world sort, out of fashion to-day as Voltaire

is out of fashion ; in friendship it was shown his character had been constant and sure. Finally the Letters were full of the charm of antiquarian fantasy, illustrating how Carmen and Colomba and Lokis were drawn from vivid glimpses of civilisations far removed from our own. Mdlle. Dacquin took counsel with Taine : the reply was the dignified memorial preface affixed to the *LETtres à UNE INCONNUE*.

The wide celebrity of this publication made no change in Mdlle. Dacquin's life. She acknowledged the ownership of the letters which at once identified her with the Unknown ; but she made no sign when imaginary replies to the letters were published, and both French and English readers were mystified and in some cases taken in. In France there is none of that vulgar chase after popular writers which our own countrymen have adopted with so many other inconvenient things from America. It was easy for Mdlle. Dacquin to disregard all but the best and surest way of securing good company,—the way of wit and friendship in intimacy. There was in her character that innate quality which Mérimée called feline, and which is certainly feminine, the love of mystery. This was written in a sensitive face, instinct with the play of life, and felt in her conversation, which, with all its vivacity, was full of reserve. In her drawing-room in the Rue Jacob, surrounded by her water-colour sketches, Algerian souvenirs, and those of many other countries, she looked a complete Southerner, treasuring leisure and remembrance of the sunshine. The black lace falling on her abundant hair and framing a face, never beautiful except for the illuminating

eyes, increased the impression. But the conversation was that of a woman in touch with English minds through our literature (she read four languages), and with the traveller who was compelled as the Celt of old to tell her something new. She delighted in the music of Chopin ; and his pupil Teleffsen, who told stories of his master so well, was among her friends. Another recollection of those old days is of animated talks between Mdlle. Dacquin and an English clergyman, who had married one of her friends. In these discussions Mdlle. Dacquin was a loyal Catholic. There are allusions to this throughout Mérimée's whole correspondence : "*votre Père Lacordaire*,"—"votre Père Ravignan,"—"vos néo-Catholiques,"—"votre influence là-haut." It may be said that this faith was of a nature to come between her and Mérimée at one time in their intercourse ; but that it never forbade her friendship or made it necessary for her to judge him by standards which were rules of her own conduct.

The marriage of her niece in 1875 enlarged her family circle. With her and her children Mdlle. Dacquin latterly spent all her summers in the environs of Paris ; but her winters were spent in the capital in the house where she had lived so long and where she died. One of her most precious legacies was of some books, the Letters of Madame de Sévigné in twelve volumes, and an English Shakespeare. These had been safe in her shelves when the flames of the Commune destroyed Mérimée's library ; for he had bequeathed them to Jenny Dacquin in a letter written two hours before his death.

MUSIC HATH CHARMS.¹

It was the very last place in the world where you would have expected to hear the notes of a church-harmonium ; and the old man who, seated on a reed stool, was playing *God Save the Queen* with one finger, was the very last person whom you would have expected to see performing upon it. But there it stood, quite at home, between the wooden pillars which divided the central living-room from the crowd of latticed closets around it ; and there he sate, quite at home, on the stool, his naked brown legs struggling with the bellows, his brown fingers patting down the keys with a sort of pompous precision. For Punoo was a music-master, and that was his pupil who, with a yawn, was watching his proceedings from the floor while she threaded beads on a string intermittently. That was also the last place from which one would expect any one to take a music-lesson ; but old Punoo being blind was fully persuaded that Bahâni was dutifully at his elbow. This blindness of his was, however, far more to his advantage than his disadvantage as a master. It was, in short, the cause of his being one at all ; since had he had the use of his eyes no mother would have dreamed of employing a man, who was not more than forty-five at the outside, in teaching her girls. As it was, his time was fully taken up in the houses of the clerks, contractors, barristers, and such like, who for some reason or another desired to impart the exotic accomplishment of music to their daughters or wives. But of all these houses Punoo loved the one which contained the harmonium best ; not because of his pupil, since Bahâni, who

was betrothed to a young man who might be seen any day on a Hammer-smith omnibus over on the other side of the world, never learned anything ; but because of the instrument itself. To tell truth it had quite a fine tone, especially when all the wind in its wheezy bellows was sent into one note. And then the playing of it seemed to satisfy him from head to foot. All the other instruments, the accordions and concertinas, even his own fiddle with seven strings of which he was really very fond, only employed his head and his hands ; but this made his whole body as it were to toil and labour after melody. As he sate, with his forehead bedewed with perspiration, the expression on his sightless face, turned upwards all unconscious of the dingy, sordid smoke-blackened rafters which limited his vision, was quite sufficient to make up for the lack of it in the music ; it was the expression of a prisoner who, through the bars of a cage, sees freedom. But the odd little gridiron in the centre of the dark room, which gave it some light and air from the roof above, was scarcely large enough to allow even of Punoo's wizened figure to pass through.

"Lo, it gives one a melting of the liver and a sinking of the heart to hear thee, Master-jee," remarked Mai Kishnu, bustling in with a handful of radishes for the pickle-stew. "Canst not play something more lively, something that goes not wombling up and down like an ill-greased wheel, something with a count in it that gives a body time to catch the beat of it ? For sure I could make better music with my ladle and tray ; better music

¹ Copyright in the United States.

for a bride anyhow; and mark my word, Bahâni, when thou art really one there shall be none of this boo-hooing and wow-wow-ing, that might set free thoughts of wolves and God knows what monsters to damage all thy hopes."

"Tis not likely, Mai," said Punoo, desisting to speak with great dignity, "that Bahâni will have mastered so much. 'Tis not given to all to play *God Save the Queen* as I do."

"That is good hearing!" ejaculated the house-mother piously. "But the girl gets on, I hope, Master Punoo. Her father writes of it often; and the instrument, as thou knowest, cost full ten shillings."

In Punoo's account, which he related to his other customers, it had cost five times that amount, and he had a spirited description of the auction where Colonels and Deputy-Sahibs and Barrack-Masters had bidden in vain against Bahâni's father Mool Chand, who was municipal clerk in an outlying district. According to Punoo also it had cost five hundred times that amount when the Padre Sahib,—sometimes it was the Lord Padre Sahib (the Bishop),—had sent for it originally from England. There was a further legend, vague and misty even to himself, which he kept holy, as it were, from profane use by locking it away in his own breast, which hinted that the harmonium had been thrown on the market from no desire to get rid of it, but simply from pecuniary necessity; the Chaplain having been forced into selling his greatest treasure in order to pay a bill for a new one. To tell truth, Punoo's estimate of the harmonium was vague and misty on more points than this. He was, in fact, absolutely ignorant of anything concerning it, save that if you blew persistently at the bellows and pressed the keys it made a noise which somehow or another seemed to

set you free, and yet kept you longing for something more. Punoo knew not for what, having not the slightest idea that he had been born with music in his soul, and that if he had first seen the light in the Western hemisphere instead of the Eastern, he would most likely have been a Wagnerite or some other kind of musical enthusiast.

As it was, to oblige Mai Kishnu, he played *Minnia Punniya* as quickly as he could, though it was a pain and grief to him to give up the long-drawn notes which sounded so beautiful in *God Save our Gracious Queen*. But Mai Kishnu stirred the pickle-stew to the new rhythm, emphasising it properly with little strokes of the ladle upon the resounding brass pot. Bahâni, she said, must learn that tune against her man's return from being made into a balesiter (barrister), whereat Bahâni with the utmost decorum giggled and blushed over her beads. She was a pretty, pert girl, who looked upon the future with perfect serenity; for being married to her first cousin whose widowed mother lived in the house, she knew exactly what the amount of friction between her and her future mother-in-law would be; and she knew also that she would generally be able to escape quietly, as she did now, from the scene of conflict and leave the two elder women to have it out at full length if they chose. They generally did choose, because they nearly always had an interested audience; for the quaint rambling old house with its rabbit-warren of tiny rooms opening out to little bits of roof, was full of relations, chiefly women whose husbands were away in Government employ. They each had a separate lodging, as it were, though they were quite as often in some one else's room as in their own, especially when the sound of shrill altercation echoed through the wooden partitions. By

a recognised etiquette, however, all serious disputes were carried on in the well-room where the women bathed. It was more a verandah than a room though the arches were filled up breast-high with a screening wall. But through the hole in the floor, above which the windlass stood, you could not only see right down into the well on the basement story, but also see the people in the street coming for their water. It was when Bahāni was discovered lying flat on the floor so as to crane over and peep into the very street itself, that the fiercest quarrels arose between Mai Kishnu and her widowed sister-in-law. And no quarrel ever ran its course without a reference of some sort to the harmonium, and the iniquity and idiotcy of learning to play tunes as if you were a bad woman in the bazaar. In her heart of hearts Mai Kishnu agreed with this view of the question; but she would sooner have died than confess it, so she invariably carried the war into the enemy's country instead, by insisting on it that Bahāni learned in deference to the oft-expressed desire of her lawful husband, that husband being the complainant's own son. And sometimes, but not often, for she was a faithful defender of the absent municipal clerk, she would clinch the matter by telling her sister-in-law that if there was iniquity or idiotcy about, her brother was also to blame. Whereupon Rādha, who, being the widow of an elder brother, really was in a way the head of the house, would retort that in that case it was all the more necessary for the women-folk of the family to remember that the salvation of souls lay with them; so she would beg to remind all present that this being a dark Saturday or a light Friday with some particular event in prospect, or some particular event in the past, it behoved no

pious women of that family to eat, say radishes, on that day. Now, when you have just spent much time and skill in the preparing of pickle for a large household, it is aggravating to be told that it is an impious diet. Still there was always the obvious retort that on such days widows ate nothing at all. So then Rādha, with pharisaical acquiescence, would retire to her own little bit of a room, with her husband's photograph (he had been a clerk also) hung between two German prints of the Madonna and Herodias' daughter (which did duty respectively for the infant Krishna and Durga Devi slaying the demons), and begin counting her beads with a clatter, and repeating her texts in an aggressively loud voice; while Mai Kishnu, after sending the pickle-stew of radishes down in the window-basket as an alms to the first beggar in the street, would begin to cook something else; something as nasty as her deft hands could make it, since this, oddly enough, relieved her feelings.

But Punoo would go on playing *God Save our Gracious Queen* on the old harmonium with perfect serenity, all unconscious of the fact that two women were cursing it in their hearts as a malevolent demon bent on ruining the household. It was a quaint household when all was said and done, this colony of women, whose husbands were for the most part away serving the Government in remote stations. Quaintest of all it was, perhaps, when in the afternoon the boys belonging to it (and there were many, thank heaven! despite the demon) came home from school; embryo clerks full of classes and examinations, yet with a word or two for crickets and a desire for pickled radishes on every day in the calendar.

"Ask your Aunt Rādha," Mai Kishnu would say shortly to their remonstrances over the nasty substitute for the delicacy. "Twas she

forced me into giving your stomachs-ful of my best pickles to some dirty beast of a beggar in the street. God forgive me if he was a holy man, but he may have been a Mohammedan for all I know, and what good will that do to my soul?"

But despite the crickets and the examinations, despite the vague leavening of Western free thought, the boys fought shy of their Aunt Râdha, perhaps from the veil of uncertainty which their education was necessarily throwing over all things. There were so many ideas, and one must be right; it might be this one. In a way they were more afraid of her and her views than Mai Kishnu, who never doubted at all. But then Mai Kishnu knew that she could always have the upper hand over her sister-in-law in the matter of cold baths in the winter mornings; for Râdha thought twice about interfering with the beams in other folks' eyes when that mote of her own about warm water for religious ablutions was ready to her adversary's hand.

The boys, however, though they ate the nasty substitute for pickles without more ado, were not so biddable in the matter of *God Save the Queen*. As they sate on the dark flight of steps between the living-room and the well-verandah they used to pipe away at it in English in the oddest falsetto. And Bahâni, who was a bit of a tomboy, would imitate them, and then go into fits of shrill laughter at her own gibberish.

Altogether it was a very quaint household, and it was a very quaint noise indeed which went up to high heaven from it; the boys' voices, Bahâni's mocking laugh, Râdha's muttered texts, Mai Kishnu's vexed clattering of her ladles and pots, and blind Punoo's perspiring efforts after melody on the old harmonium. For he never attempted harmony; that

was beyond his self-taught execution altogether. But the sense of it was there, showing itself in sheer delight at pulling out all the stops that still existed, and blowing away until he could no more from sheer exhaustion.

So the years had passed contentedly enough for every one; especially for the old music-master who every day went away with the unleavened cake which was his only fee, knowing that even such payment was in excess of his desires, since it was enough for him to have the honour and glory of playing on the harmonium, and of boasting about his proficiency on that instrument to his other pupils who were forced to be content with an accordion or some such ignoble instrument.

And then one day the funny, old rambling house was in a perfect ferment of preparation, and even Râdha's face was beaming; for her son was coming home. He was coming from the Hammersmith omnibus and the boarding-house in Notting Hill, coming from the rush and roar of London to take up the threads of life again in the dark latticed rooms where Mai Kishnu made pickles and his mother said her prayers; above all where Bahâni waited for him, all dyed with turmeric and henna, and clothed in tinselled garments. The little household temple up on the roof, where there were more German prints doing duty as various gods and goddesses, had scarcely an instant's respite from the multitudinous rituals; and if there was a minute or two to spare, the women downstairs were sure to remember something else which if left undone would bring the most direful misfortune on the young couple. There was no quarrelling now, only a babel of shrill kindly voices. And there was no music, save of a kind to which Mai Kishnu could clatter her ladles and pans; drubbings of drums and

endless tinklings of sutaras; for the good lady had set her foot down as regards the harmonium, even to the extent of showing off Bahâni's accomplishment. Accomplishment forsooth! What need was there of such fools' talk between a newly-met young couple? And though Gunesha had come back from the other side of the world dressed like a real sahib, that did not prevent his being a young man, and knowing a pretty bride when he saw one. So, thank heaven! there they were at last, in the pleasant cool upper room on the roof, which had been all newly whitewashed and painted and strewn with flowers for the auspicious occasion, looking into each other's eyes as young people should. It was all so proper, so touching, so infinitely satisfactory, that for once Kishnu and Râdha fell on each other's necks and wept tears of sympathy.

But Punoo wandered in and out as a privileged guest among the merry-making and the bustle, sidling up to his closed treasure, feeling it all over in sightless fashion, and longing for the time when he should be called upon, as the bride's master, to display her accomplishment; for by this time she could play *Minnie Punniya* and a few other tunes quite correctly. But the days passed, and those two on the roof, despite music and culture, despite all the sciences and all the ologies, were quite content with those things which had contented their fathers and mothers before them. It was not so with old Punoo. Even his fiddle afforded him no comfort; and though his other pupils' accordions and concertinas gave him the correct musical intervals which his ear approved instinctively, but which his hand was too unpractised to reproduce with the accuracy which satisfied him, they were poor substitutes for that splendid tone which was born of vehement

pumping and perspiration. Perhaps it was really the latter he craved; that feeling of labouring body and soul to give expression to something within him.

Even billing and cooing like a couple of pigeons on the roof, however, must come to an end, and after some three weeks of it, the barrister one day discovered that there was a harmonium in the dark arches of the living-room. He was beginning by this time to think that he had perhaps drifted a little too far back into the old life, and that as he had every intention, when this first very natural and inevitable relapse was over, of setting up house on more civilised lines, it might be as well to show off his new habits a little, and so emphasise the difference which he meant to draw between his life and the life led in the quaint old ancestral house. So without more ado, without any asking of how it came there, or who played on it, he whisked his coat-tails (for he had resumed European dress on his descent from the roof) over the music-stool with the consummate air of a performer, and set his feet to the pedals and his hands to the keys.

"What a wheezy old thing!" he cried, when a sort of agonised moo as from a sick cow came in response. Bahâni, standing decorously in the shadow with her veil down in most alluring bashfulness, tittered, and old Punoo, who had stood still in sheer surprise, moved forward with a superior smile.

The barrister heard and saw, and a frown came to his self-satisfied face. "The bellows are leaking," he cried again; "but never mind, it shall do something; I'll make it!"

Something indeed! The women giggled and stopped their ears, but old Punoo stood transfixed, a great pain, a great joy coming to his sight-

less face. Was that the harmonium? Was that *God Save the Queen*, that pean of melody and harmony together, coming in great waves of sound and bearing him away, further and further and further into some unknown land that was yet a Land of Promise? And all these years he had lived in ignorance; he had boasted, he had said that he could play it, his priceless treasure! Priceless! ay, he had been right there. Listen to it! Was it not priceless? A sort of passion of pride surged up in him overpowering all thought of himself.

Then there was a loud crack, a wheeze, a sudden silence; and the barrister stood up wiping his forehead, for he had worked hard. "That has done for the old thing," he said with a laugh; "but it was past work anyhow, and I prefer a piano any day of the week. Don't stand in the corner, Bahāni. You must learn to behave like an English lady now, and there

is nothing to be ashamed of in your husband, I assure you."

Mai Kishnu and Rādha looked at each other as if for support, and the vague affright and sheer surprise of their faces made them once more sympathetic. "It is a new world, sister," whispered the one to the other as they moved off respectively to their prayers and their pickles, leaving the barrister making love to his bride over the prospect of the piano he was going to give her.

But Punoo moved softly, blindly, over to his old seat and set his feet to the pedals and his fingers to the keys. But no sounds came from them, not even that poor travesty of *God Save the Queen* which had once filled him with pride. And as he sat fingering the dumb keys idly, a dim content that it should be so came into the old musician's soul. The swan-song had been beautiful, but it had been a song of death. He, after all, had known the harmonium best.

A VIRGINIAN SPORTSMAN.

NOBODY ever quite knew what the Captain took his rank from, though that was a trifle in Virginia. It was said that at some remote period before the war he had navigated a batteau on the rapid waters of the Staunton river, and had carried tobacco and grain for the planters in days when railways were distant and high roads, as now, the worst in the Anglo-Saxon world. So though an expert only in the handling of a punt-pole the Captain may be said in a sense to have been a member of the mercantile marine of his country. He had never in truth set eyes upon the ocean, nor had any desire that way; nor did he come of a people that were much given to going down to the sea in ships. In fact he would often tell us that he "had no use for so much water."

Four main roads met in front of the Captain's door, a circumstance which suited exactly his gregarious temperament. And they were roads indeed; roads such as only a Virginian would have faced upon wheels, or even calmly contemplated day after day as the Captain from the security of his front porch contemplated them. One of these red rutty tracks came toiling up from regions to the eastward wholly given over and sacred to tobacco; and if you had followed it on towards the sunset, and had not broken your neck or disappeared in a mud-hole, you would have found yourself eventually within sight of the Blue Ridge faintly outlined against the distant sky. The other came from counties lying to the northward that had seen much better

days, and after passing the Captain's house shot off in a straight line regardless of obstacles for the frontier of North Carolina which was barely a dozen miles away. In fact the Captain, who was born just here at the forks of the old Bethel and Shuckburgh pikes, had, as you may say, a narrow escape of being born a North Carolinian, and that would not have done at all. For everybody, in Virginia at any rate, knows that when a North Carolinian boasts of hailing from the Old North State he takes very good care to add if he can conscientiously do so, "but right close on the Virginia line." It is ill guessing what the Captain would have done if he had been born a North Carolinian, for he was a most ardent patriot, and a patriot in Virginia in those days meant a patriotic Virginian,—which is a highly intelligible sentiment. It is possible that the bosom of a North Carolinian may also swell at the thought of his mother State; but the sentiment would be one that a dispassionate observer would find no small difficulty in sympathising with.

The Captain had a strange domicile; he lived in the shell of an old coaching inn, and a very famous hostelry it had been in its day. First, however, came the railroads, and then the war with its chaotic ruin finally extinguished every spark of its ancient glory. For twenty years it had been slowly rotting, plank by plank, shingle by shingle. The Captain, however, reckoned it would last his time and would hardly anticipate nature by falling in upon him bodily. A rough board at the

corner of the fence carried an inscription, rudely traced in lamp black, to the effect that the weary traveller could still get accommodation for man and horse; while upon the next panel was inscribed in still larger letters the much less hospitable notification, *No hunting or fishing here*. Such, it may be remarked, was the local and legal fashion of proclaiming that the proprietor was a game preserver; but of this anon.

As for the house, it was a rambling and now crazy edifice of wood from which every vestige of paint had long since faded. The main central portion still stood fairly upright, but the two wings lurched away on either side as if threatening to part company altogether with the parent stem. Long galleries ran around the outside of the queer structure both in the upper and lower stories, and helped, no doubt, to bind it together and prolong its precarious existence. Moss had taken hold of the twisting shingles of the roof. The tin gutter-pipes had shaken loose, and swung in strips from the eaves. There was hardly a pane of glass in the whole building except in the two or three rooms occupied by the Captain and his rare guests; and even there strips of the local newspaper did duty for many a vanished pane. Such of the Venetian shutters as survived swung loose, often upon only a single hinge, and with the dangling gutter-pipes made such an uproar on a windy night, that an abode which was ghostly enough by day was truly terrifying in a midnight storm. The Captain, however, cared for none of these things. The decay amidst which he lived never caused him, we will venture to say, even a passing pang. The very extent of the dilapidations paralysed perhaps any feeble spark of energy he may have possessed; and he lived as jollily as the proverbial sandboy amid his ruins. For there

were rows of barns and stables in the oak grove behind the house, some of which had collapsed, the logs lying in a heap as they had fallen, while others leaned over at an angle that would have been impossible but for the heavy props that the Captain and his negroes had been absolutely forced to put up in self-defence. And this was necessary, for besides the pair of mules the estate still boasted of, an occasional traveller of the humbler kind from time to time sought the hospitality of the dilapidated tavern. The Captain, like every good Virginian, was greatly given to reminiscences, and his favourite theme was the animated splendour of the Plummer House in the old days when his father owned it. A somewhat notable rendezvous it had, in truth, once been, as was natural, seeing that it stood in the angle where the old highway from the Carolinas to the North crossed the route along which the planters from the regions lying eastwards used to travel in some rustic state towards the fashionable spas in the Virginia Mountains. Family coaches, dragged through the dust or mud by sleek horses and piloted by negro coachmen, were almost daily visitors in those halcyon times throughout the summer season; while gay young dandies on well-bred nags rode in and out of the shady yard by the score, drank juleps on the verandah, or flirted and danced in the now lonely rooms with the fair members of First Families who happened to be at that stage of their annual pilgrimage to the healing waters of the Alleghany Valleys. Never, perhaps, has highway tavern had a greater fall. The tobacco-waggon, plunging and crashing onwards to the still distant market-town, is nowadays almost the only vehicle that ever pulls up before the deserted inn, and even the waggon-drivers in these hard times bring usually their own rations and camp,

if benighted, on the patch of turf under the old chestnut tree at the cross roads. Still the Captain, who is gregarious and has long outlived financial ambition, gets some satisfaction, at any rate, out of their society. And sometimes a casual horseman, unduly reckless of his pocket and still more regardless of his inner man, would stay and face that nightmare of fat pork, soda-biscuit, and black coffee which the Captain's wife provided in exchange for a twenty-five cent piece.

Though the Captain would have registered himself as a hotel-keeper, as a matter of fact he was first and chiefly a turkey-hunter, and to support this inexpensive profession he owned, fortunately, about two hundred acres of land. Though the latter were perhaps as poor as any two hundred acres in Virginia, which is saying much indeed, the Captain's wants were so few and slight that when he had paid his taxes (amounting perhaps to some fifteen dollars), dull care may be said to have been wholly lifted from the establishment till the next visit of the tax-gatherer. The farm was cultivated in irregular and spasmodic fashion by a couple of negroes who worked it on shares, using the Captain's mules and giving their landlord half the tobacco, two-thirds of the corn, and three-fourths of the wheat and oats. In a dry year the whole lot of it could, we think, have been put into a waggon and drawn to market by a pair of stout horses even over the Shuckburgh pike. Only a portion of the estate would any longer produce even such skeleton crops as the Captain's negroes raised. The rest lay sick unto death with a sterility such as in any other countries known to man would be absolutely inconceivable where soil existed at all. Scrub pines and briars and sassafras and broomsedge had covered the corpse of most of the Captain's property in their not un-

kindly grasp; and for the rest it was a moot question whether they or the homestead would give out first. Even Uncle Moses and Jake Plummer (Jake had belonged in the days of slavery to the Captain) had begun to complain, and think that the residential advantages of their master's property were almost too dearly purchased. But the Captain troubled himself little about such things. For him the year had two seasons only; the one when it was possible to shoot, and the other when it was not. In the former few men were more active; during the latter, including of course the spring and summer, none probably ever took their ease with more unswerving deliberation. For every morning after breakfast, when it was not raining, the Captain carried his chair down from the rickety porch and set it against the rough trunk of a shady acacia tree, and as the shadow moved round with the sun the Captain moved his chair round with it. So that while the morning found him with his eye upon the lower road, the evening found that watchful orb surveying the approach from the Piedmont country. This was not so much for possible customers, who might or might not share the Captain's midday meal, for that great man was not in the least degree mercenary, but for such as might haply prove sociable and responsive to his urgent appeal to "get down and chat him some."

The Captain's notice that his place was forbidden to casual gunners has been alluded to. It may seem strange that such an ardent sportsman, who hunted the entire country for some miles round, should have been so churlish about his own little domain of two hundred acres. But the danger-signal on the fence was not hoisted for the benefit of the Captain's neighbours, who were rarely sportsmen, being small farmers mostly with large

farms (if the seeming paradox be admissible), but against that type of humanity which our friend designated as "them city fellahs," and for whom he was accustomed with great warmth and frequency to declare he had "no manner of use." In former days the few gentry who lived in that neighbourhood had been wont to shoot partridges and rabbits in friendly unchallenged fashion over each other's and their humbler neighbours' land; but since the great upheaval social centres had wholly changed. What wealth and leisure existed was now in the towns, and it was from there that the gunners chiefly came. "Gawd knows who they are," the Captain used to say, as he sent a charge of tobacco juice at a sitting grasshopper, "or whar they come from, a-whirlin' over the country as if it belonged to 'em with their brichloaders and neepaty, napity¹ dawgs, and fancy coats, and pants, and fixins. No, surr, I reckon no city chap'll fire a gun off for a right smart ways up and down this yer pike. I've fixed that, anyway." And so he had, for the danger-signal was upon every farm, though not against the Captain, for five miles round. Not being a "city fellah," we had no cause ourselves to complain of this; and indeed we often shot with the Captain's party, though never, if it could possibly be helped, upon the same beat with that great man himself, for he was not a pleasant companion after the partridges ("bird hunt'n," he would have called it), nor were his dogs shining examples to a young and heady setter in whose future you might feel an interest. He regarded you on such occasions rather as an opponent than a partner; and his great object was to bring down

¹ This was, we believe, an entirely original phrase of the Captain's, inspired by an occasional glimpse of the dainty, well-groomed Laverack setters that had been recently introduced into the country.

every bird wherever it might happen to rise, before you could pull on it, and so being in a position to boast of what he called "beating the crowd" when the game was counted out at the end of the day. As the Captain was only a very moderate performer at this work it resulted in his eye being wiped not seldom; and this he took so very much to heart that it was almost as distracting (for we had a great personal regard for the Captain) as having him cut down your birds as they rose in front of you or even upon your off side. We can see him now, in his big straw hat and flapping tail-coat, bustling up to the setting dog with elbows out, his gun at the ready, and an almost fierce expression of rivalry in his eye and general demeanour. His dogs would certainly not have been accused of being "neepaty, napity," for they were lumbering, poking brutes nearly as big as donkeys, with much more in telligence and nose than speed, till you unhaply knocked over a bird within range of their immediate vision, when they were fast enough in all conscience, and you would be fortunate indeed if you got there in time to save a wing-feather. The Captain had a gun, too, that was something worse than a curiosity. It may be unnecessary, perhaps, to remark that it was a muzzle-loader, but its ancient stock was a masterpiece of splicing and riveting; the barrels were worn as thin as a sixpence, and though they had so far withstood the Captain's "loads," as he called them, the nipples were accustomed upon occasions to blow off with a great sound, burying themselves in tree trunks or vanishing into space. This seemed in no way to disconcert the Captain himself; but it made his friends feel that it was almost as dangerous to be behind as in front of him. It was for every reason a

good thing, when you arranged a day over the Captain's preserves, to make up a party of four, taking your own friend and your own dogs over one line of country, while the Captain and some third party, who either did not know him or was used to him, took another. And the spirit of rivalry was always strong enough to make this eminent sportsman accede most readily to such a plan. For not only was his method of shooting irksome and his gun dangerous in a mechanical sense, but his principles as regards safety of firing were hopelessly distorted. These latter, we recollect, were illustrated most forcibly upon a rather unfortunate occasion. A Canadian sportsman of some repute had come down to the district for the best fortnight of the partridge-shooting, and we had included in our programme a day over the Captain's preserves. A party of four was as usual arranged, and it was easily contrived that we should separate, ourselves with the Canadian taking one beat and the Captain with his friend taking the other. We had a big stubble field, however, to traverse upon this occasion before the company separated, and in it a covey of birds was flushed wild, owing to the jealousies of our various dogs. Beyond the Captain at the extreme right of our line was his friend (not ours, thank goodness), and he had taken advantage of the brief halt to put his foot up on a fence, his back being towards us, for the purpose of adjusting a boot-lace. A lagging bird in the meantime rose before the Captain, and swinging to the right flew straight for the gentleman in question, who being about seventy to eighty yards off, neither saw nor heard it. The Captain, however, levelled his cannon with the greatest deliberation and fired. Down came the bird, and up sprang his friend with imprecations loud and deep, it is true, but

not a whit too strong for the occasion, for he had received most of the half-spent charge in his person. "It's all right, squire" (the victim was a magistrate), sung out the Captain cheerily as he began calmly re-loading his gun; "I saw you had your back turned towards me." It was fortunate for all parties that our paths here diverged. The story is, we believe, still told in Canada as an illustration of what to expect at a Virginian shooting-party.

It was at turkey-hunting, however, that the Captain really shone. At game-shooting he was a zealous but, as will probably be understood, a not very satisfactory performer; but at turkeys he was really great. The wild turkey, that noblest of woodland birds and wariest of feathered fowl, shows over a large part of Virginia few signs of extinction. So long indeed as the tall primeval forests, dense pine woods, and abandoned fields cover so large a portion of the country as they now do, the turkey will successfully defy the efforts of the few hunters who are sufficiently skilled in the art to menace his existence. For the Captain's friend, the city fella, would never cause a single feather of that proud bird's to tremble; while as for the average sportsman, who has anything to do at all besides shoot, life is generally voted too short for a pursuit that consists wholly of woodcraft, contains so many certain blanks, and in which marksmanship plays so small a part. But for the Captain life was not too short for what was in fact its principal object. Partridge-shooting was only a secondary matter with him, as he, indeed, was in that art but a secondary performer.

It was when the first sharp frosts of October had fired the woods with the gorgeous splendour of decay that the Captain began to stir himself after his long siesta, and fetch down from

over the mantel-shelf not only the double-barrelled fowling-piece already noticed, but the long Kentucky rifle that had belonged to his father and that he still used for squirrels and, upon certain occasions, for the noble turkey himself. His crops were housed, such as they were : his tobacco was being "fired" in the barn, such as it was, and coming out all the colours of the rainbow ; and Jake and Uncle Moses for the fifth or sixth year in succession were vowing that they would quit farming. And it was at this season that the young broods of turkeys, who roamed the woodlands or picked their way stealthily through the rushy fields, became lawful prey under the game-laws of Virginia to those who, in the local vernacular, could succeed in "catching up with them." These flocks, or gangs, numbered as a rule from eight to fourteen birds, and by this time had grown to be nearly the size of the highly educated old veterans, their parents, who watched over their wanderings. In every great stretch of woodland, or where continuous belts of timber touched or almost touched each other, there one brood at least would be found ranging, always within certain more or less definite limits. Wherever, too, a mountain spur threw its wooded crest a few hundred feet above the low ground, it would be almost certainly frequented by a brood of the stately timorous birds.

The Captain had by instinct and experience a very accurate notion each season where to find the various gangs. But in addition to this, not a farmer, nor even a negro, passed along the high road in August and September who was not ready to place the results of his local observations at the service of the "popular landlord of the Plummer House" as the county papers, when in a serio-comic vein,

were accustomed to speak of our friend. For ourselves, though we made a point of having two or three excursions of this kind every year with the Captain, we could not boast of having even the most elementary proficiency in the art. Life, as we have said, seemed too short, and such measure of skill as we possessed in stopping the rapid twisting partridge of Virginia would have been entirely thrown away in hunting the turkey. For when that noble bird could be induced to present you with a shot, it was usually a sitting one ; and even when otherwise, the old familiar metaphor of a flying haystack was in such case almost literally applicable. But the essence of the mystery lay in securing the shot ; and we are free to confess that, save when under the wing of the Captain and the shadow of his blunderbuss, the elusive tactics of the king of forest-birds were too many for us.

The chief and vital accomplishment, without which you could not hope to be a turkey-hunter at all, was that of imitating the call of the wily keen-eared bird. This sounds simple enough ; but as a matter of fact it was about as difficult, or seemed to us so, as learning the violin, and not nearly so useful for general purposes. The implement used for this nice deception was usually the wing-bone of the turkey itself, which seems surely the very refinement of guile. It was by no means difficult with a little practice to imitate the *tuk ! tuk !* of your intended victim entirely to your own satisfaction, and to that perhaps of some inexperienced friends ; but if you could not convince the turkey to an absolute certainty that you were one of his relatives, or should he suspect for a moment that there was treachery in the note, you might just as well, so far as getting a shot was concerned, have fired off both barrels at once into the air ; even

better, for sometimes a great alarm, such as the rush of a barking dog towards a flock, will act upon it in a paralysing or stupefying fashion. Indeed, many turkey-hunters, the Captain included, kept a small dog trained to run in and bark after the shot for the purpose of scattering the birds. The Captain's "tuckey-dawg," as he called it, was a singular looking animal, being what was generally known in Virginia as a "fyce," and the term, which, we think, is Elizabethan English, was applied in the South to every species of small dog indiscriminately. The Captain's fyce was of a yellow shade, with the head of a fox, the curly tail of a squirrel, and the legs of a turnspit. He would, in short, have been locally described as "a bench-legged fyce." His chief mission was to tree squirrels, and to bark up the trunk till the Captain with his long small-bore Kentucky rifle arrived upon the scene. For this great sportsman took sometimes what he called "a spell of squ'rl hunt'n'," the large gray squirrel being a popular luxury on the tables of the Virginia country folk.

We used to start generally about sunrise on those glorious autumn mornings. So far as our own feelings were concerned there was none of the gravity and responsibility of a campaign against the partridges. We were out to enjoy ourselves in an irresponsible fashion, to revel in the gorgeous colouring of the woodlands, to drink in the fresh, balmy, resinous air of early autumn, and take any bit of luck that came with thankfulness. But the Captain, we need not say, was very serious indeed on such occasions. We can see him now climbing stealthily up the broken surface of the rudely cultivated or abandoned fields that stretched up to the edge of the forests clothing the ridge and summit of the mountain,

his keen and experienced eye searching everywhere for some faint print on the red clay or black loam that tells of the recent wanderings of the gang and the direction in which their footsteps have been bent. It is not, however, till we enter the forest above the highest line of cultivation that the time arrives for absolute silence and the extremity of caution. There is up here little underbrush or covert in which birds might be taken unawares, for the tall gray trunks of chestnut, oak, and poplar shoot up from a smooth carpet of dead leaves, while far above our heads, broken here and there with patches of bright blue sky, hangs the now motionless canopy of leaves, one gorgeous blaze of scarlet and gold. Slowly and cautiously, about a hundred yards apart, we steal along between the tree-trunks, up the long ridge of the mountain which, dipping slightly here and there in its ascent, gives a possible chance of coming unawares upon the turkeys in some hollow or beneath some ridge. The Captain has his celebrated gun loaded with heaven knows what, for to-day he carries his shot in a medicine-bottle and his powder in a mustard-tin, the well-worn flasks, as very often happens, being laid up for repairs; and the fyce dog, with its bushy tail curled over its back, prowls along behind him.

We are already very high up in the world, and the silence of the Indian summer in these lofty forests is intense. The bark of a squirrel, or the hoarse call of a crow, seems to make the whole air tremble. Far away below us lies the many-coloured rolling plain of old Virginia, basking in the sun with its red fallows and now golden forests and dark splashes of pine wood. The white gleam of a homestead shows here and there, while a score of

scattered smoke-wreaths mark the site of tobacco-barns where the newly-gathered leaves are slowly curing. A faint gray outline rolls along the western horizon ; it is the Blue Ridge, the first outwork of the Alleghanies. The song of a ploughman, the bark of a dog, the thud of an axe come up faintly from far below us ; but where we are walking the mere snapping of a twig makes a noise like a pistol, and has at all hazards to be avoided if we would hope to keep on good terms with the Captain and catch, perchance, the wary turkey napping below yonder ridge. There is little other game or even bird-life in these silent altitudes. The woodpecker taps as if he revelled in the noise he made ; the gray squirrel, safe to-day at any rate from the Captain, leaps from tree to tree or scuttles up the hoary trunks ; Brer Rabbit (for this, it must be remembered, is the land of Uncle Remus) is much too sociable to mount so high above civilisation, though his old friend, the fox, now and again on these occasions steals across one's vision. It is just possible too that a brood of ruffed grouse, rare though the bird is east of the Alleghanies, and almost as shy as the turkey itself, might haunt these wooded hill-tops. But should one of these grand birds, by some strange freak, get up under the very muzzle of your gun, refrain, as you value the Captain's alliance, from yielding to temptation ; for so far as turkeys are concerned, a shot in these silent, echoing woods would most certainly ruin everything for the day, or at least for the morning. It is well too to keep an eye upon the leaves over which you are carefully treading. For the Captain at any rate would notice in a moment the slightest disturbance of their surface, and can tell at once whether it is the work of turkeys, and almost

estimate the length of time it is since they were scratching among them.

Suddenly from just beyond the ridge, a hundred yards or so to the left, a sound like an explosion of dynamite seems to shake the whole mountain. The Captain has fired off his gun, and he never fires at anything less than a turkey on these occasions. A hasty flank movement of a few yards brings us in view of the situation, and a sound as of heavy wings flapping follows the concussion of the shot. The fyce dog, with tail well curled over his back, is charging along and yelping in a state of great excitement. The Captain is reloading his piece from the medicine-bottle and the mustard-tin, with a sheet of the county paper for wadding ; it is perhaps needless to remark that his left barrel remains at full cock during the operation.

The whole gang have risen, it appears, at long range from behind some old panels of a boundary fence. The Captain fired, it seems, with a view to scatter the birds, though he declares he crippled one. It may be added that he has never yet been known to admit missing anything clean ; and indeed, "the Captain's cripples" have passed as an expression into the local phraseology.

And now comes the really serious part of the whole day's proceedings. The birds are thought to have been at any rate partially scattered, thanks to the noisy efforts of the bench-legged fyce well supported by the Captain's artillery, and also to the fact of their having been taken unawares. It now only remains to select a favourable position upon the ridge where we can both shelter ourselves from view and at the same time command all the likely approaches. A great chestnut trunk, fallen prone and dead these three or four years, favours our design

and offers an excellent ambuscade ; sitting down behind it we possess our souls in patience for a time and discuss the situation in a low tone. Then in the fulness of time the Captain prepares to play upon his little pipe, and with lips compressed and cheeks distended the performance commences. *Tuk, tuk, tuk, tuktuk !* But the only answer comes from some solitary hoarse-voiced crow, or the *rat-tat-tat* of a woodpecker ; and in the pauses between the Captain's efforts the silence is only broken by the dropping of acorns and chestnuts round us or the light scrape of a squirrel on the leaves. It may be a long time before our companion's industrious and careful piping is rewarded, or it may indeed be, as the song says, for ever. In this case, however, response comes at last to proclaim that one, at any rate, of the scattered birds is moving on the slope of the mountain below us.

Now the exciting period begins ; we cease to speak even in whispers ; the fye dog lies low and, cocking his short ears, watches wistfully the rugged hairy face of his master, which is certainly something of a study, as he holds treacherous converse with his unsuspecting victim. These, as may be imagined, are far the most serious moments of the Captain's life. A false note might mean ruin, and it is evident from the answers that another bird has now joined the first one ; we no longer dare show our noses even above the log, and can judge of the bird's approach only by their answering notes. In ten minutes or so the *tuk, tuk*, gets very near ; the birds must be almost within shot. The Captain's veins fairly swell, and the perspiration stands out on his forehead with the responsibility of piping correctly at so short a distance. We

can now hear their feet actually treading on the dry leaves, and it occurs to us how disastrous were a sneeze at this moment. The turkeys are now beyond a doubt within easy shot. The Captain is to give the signal for action, and he grasps firmly his big gun, with five drachms of powder in each barrel if there's a grain this time, we'll warrant. It is not a pleasant gun to be at close quarters with, and for our own part we do not like it. "Now !" says the chief, and at the word we both spring into a kneeling position above the log. A couple of big gobblers fill our horizon. They have just time to lift their heavy wings. The Captain does not take our bird this time : it is too serious an occasion ; and we fire simultaneously.

We have a feeling that the drum of our ear is broken, and our head sings like a tea-kettle. A cloud of smoke hangs like a pall over everything for a second or two, for the Captain not only uses black powder in such large doses, but buys it at the country store. Both birds are dead of course ; nothing but the equivalent of "buck fever," and we are neither of us likely to suffer from that, could produce any other result. The Captain has fallen back on his elbow for the moment ; most people would be flat on their back from such a shock. "Dorgonne it, that ar blamed nipple has blowed off again !" And so it had. Still no one is hurt, except the turkeys, and we go home rejoicing under the weight of our somewhat heavy spoils ; while we seriously turn over in our mind whether it would not be worth while for the Captain's friends to raise a fund among themselves for providing him with a gun that would stand his "loads," and be less of a trial to his shooting-partners.

SIR JOHN HAWKWOOD.

THE mercenary fighting-man is a person who seldom receives his due reward during his lifetime or his just meed of fame after his death. The character is one so alien to the age in which we live, it belongs so entirely to the days when fighting was the only occupation for a gentleman, that it has forfeited alike our study and our sympathy. Volunteers we understand, but mercenaries we do not. The world apparently has grown to think that fighting as a profession,—the bare trade of arms unconsecrated by any sentiment of cause or country—is not a noble thing, and should not, however ably and gallantly followed, be adjudged the highest praise.

Possibly the world is right; but we suspect that change of system in the training of fighting men has had far more influence than mere abstract humanity in creating this opinion. In these days of short service and swift wars the old type of professional fighting man has become extinct. In every country the recruit is forced through a soldier's education at high pressure, and returned to civil life as speedily as possible, that he may earn money to pay for the education of others. No man, unless he be an officer, devotes his whole lifetime to the military calling, and consequently the few mercenaries (the name is too ignoble for them) who are known to us in these later times are without exception officers, Gordon, for instance, Valentine Baker, and Hobart. It was not so of old, when the rule was once a soldier always a soldier, and the only school was war. Then few men dreamed of rising to command

except through the ranks, and many gentlemen preferred to stay all their lives in the ranks, or at highest to carry the ensigns of their companies. Veteran soldiers were worth their weight in gold, and though by no means innocent of rapacity, followed their calling from sheer devotion to it, and thought themselves unlucky if they died in their beds.

But the world is wrong in its neglect of mercenaries,—wrong because they have played a far larger part in the world's history than is ever ascribed to them. One famous corps is indeed remembered; the Ten Thousand that marched to Cunaxa with Cyrus and back again with Xenophon. Few mercenaries exercised a much smaller influence on history than these, but then they had the good fortune to have a great historian among them. Yet what a change had there been in the history of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but for the thousands of English and Scotch mercenaries who fought under Maurice of Nassau and Gustavus Adolphus; what a change in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries without the Swiss, the Landsknechts, and the Reiters; what a change in the fourteenth without the English who served with John Hawkwood! But these mercenaries had no Xenophon to turn their actions into living history and hence they are but ill remembered. The greatest general of the fourteenth century was an Englishman whose name is unfamiliar to most Englishmen; if we can recall him to remembrance for a fugitive month we shall have done good work.

It is but vague information that we can gather as to John Hawkwood's youth. He was born in the reign of King Edward the Second, about the year 1320, at Sybil Hedingham in Essex; the second son of one Gilbert Hawkwood, a tanner. He inherited at his father's death twenty pounds and a hundred shillings (*solidi*), and sought his fortune, as became a spirited young gentleman, in the French wars. It is tolerably certain that he fought both at Crecy and Poitiers, and that he was one of the many Englishmen who, when the peace of Brétigny threw them out of legitimate employment, resolved to carry on war on their own account, and organised themselves into companies for that purpose. He must have distinguished himself early, for from the first he appears to have been elected to command the company to which he belonged. The number of these bands, composed as they were of men of all nations, and the scourge that they laid upon France, form the burden of many a lamentation in the old French Chronicles. They roved about plundering, burning, and levying blackmail at their own sweet will; nor was there in the disorganised state of the country any chance of putting them down, for, ruffians though most of them were, they were experienced soldiers and fought like devils.

A certain number were at length taken away by Bertrand du Guesclin to fight against Pedro the Cruel in Spain, but Hawkwood's company was not of these. He stayed in France, and made a terrible name by desolating Champagne and Burgundy, and finally passing swiftly down the Rhone he appeared before Avignon and threatened the Pope himself. In vain the Holy Father offered indulgences to all who would go on a crusade, and shook all the terrors of bell, book, and candle

at those who dared to menace him; he was obliged to pay blackmail like the rest, and bribe them to take service with the Marquis of Montferrat against the Visconti in Italy. So this company, richer by four hundred pounds (a vast sum in those days), and a plenary indulgence to boot, marched into Piedmont.

There, however, Hawkwood for some reason left them and returned to France, where we find him in high command at the battle of Brignais in April, 1362. The marauding companies had been at their old work in the district of Lyons, and Jacques de Bourbon had been sent against them by the crown of France with sixteen hundred good fighting men. The French found the brigands posted on a hill-side where it was impossible to ascertain their numbers or position, but having a great contempt for their enemy they resolved to attack at once. But there were cunning soldiers on the hill that day. As the French advanced up the ascent they were met by a storm of great rolling stones, and the first line of attack was beaten back. Bourbon then brought up his second line by another side only to be received with the same terrible defence; and while he and his gallant companions were trying to struggle against it and manfully holding their ground, a mass of the adventurers appeared suddenly on their flank, dismounted, with shortened lances and in close array, as at Crecy and Poitiers, and overthrew them utterly. "These companions fought so ardently that it was marvel," says Froissart; with a crafty combination of the tactics of Morgarten and Crecy, he might have added. We think that we see Hawkwood's hand in this sudden flank attack.

The company, with Hawkwood still in subordinate command, then devastated Piedmont, and so passed

finally into Italy, to add one more plague to the many already afflicting that unhappy country. Every city was torn by factions and at feud with some other city: the Pope was represented by insolent and oppressive French legates, while he himself lay helpless at Avignon; and the Visconti, able, ambitious, unscrupulous, deeply soiled by every vice, but strong in tenacity of purpose, alone maintained some sway in Italy. Hawkwood and his company were now to make themselves felt as an additional power, and they made a terrible beginning. As they advanced into the Milanese they cut their mark deep with fire and sword, and the Visconti, at the moment weak in the field, could think of no means to check them except by further devastation which should cut off their supplies. The company answered by burning over fifty places, by destroying hundreds of others, and by making audacious and successful raids on Milan itself. Finally they crossed the Apennines into Tuscany and took service with Pisa in one of its periodical wars with Florence. At the close of the first campaign (1363) the English insisted that men of all other nations should be excluded from the band, and that Hawkwood should henceforward and always command it.

At this point we may glance at the organisation of this famous company, the White Company as it was now named.¹ Its numbers of course varied greatly, but when Hawkwood took over the command, it consisted of some three thousand five hundred horse and two thousand foot. The infantry were almost entirely archers, the famous English bowmen who by "laying their body to the

bow"² could shoot with more deadly effect than any men in Europe. They wore but little defensive armour, an iron helmet, an iron breastpiece and gauntlets. The cavalry was rather lighter than that of other nations, the men wearing less defensive armour, and the horses being less heavily caparisoned. The organisation, which was introduced into Italy by the English, was by "lances"; each lance consisted of three men, knight (*caporale*), squire, and page, the two former mounted on "great horses," the last on a pony. Five lances made a post, and five posts a standard; so that the squadron, as we should now call it, consisted of sixty-five men. There was generally also a commander for every ten lances, so that the organisation corresponds pretty accurately to that which lasted in the field until a few years ago in our own army; two troops each under a troop leader, combined with a squadron under a squadron leader. All officers of course were elected. But now the essentially English characteristic comes in. The cavalry almost invariably dismounted for action and fought on foot; such was the old English tradition from the days before the Conquest to Crecy, Poitiers, and even Agincourt. For action the whole body of cavalry was formed in a circular mass (also a relic of very early days) presenting a bristling unbroken ring of lances. Each lance was held by two men, the knight and his squire, and from the additional weight thus acquired could be thrust forward with immense force; but the formation was in its essence defensive. Meanwhile the horses were parked away under charge of the pages at some distance, for they were used only on the march and solely for purposes of swifter mobility. The

¹ White was at that time the English colour, a survival from the white cross worn by them in the Crusades. The red cross was assumed at the campaign of Navarrete (1367), and lasted till the coming of the red coats.

² Bishop Latimer's description of his training with the bow.

White Company was renowned for the speed of its marches, which were the more remarkable inasmuch as they were generally carried out by night ; a practice which we are now endeavouring to reintroduce. Another notable feature of the company was its scaling-ladders, which were constructed of separate pieces fitting one into the other, and were the germ of the modern fire-escape. Lastly, and this is peculiarly English, it was beautifully turned out on parade. Their arms were bright as diligent squires with sandstone and oil and leather could make them, and they were polished till they shone like mirrors. Possibly being a white company, they used even pipe-clay for their leather ; but on this point history is silent.

For the rest they were not reckoned so cruel as Germans and Hungarians, for though they made little of cutting throats, they stopped short at mutilation and roasting ; but they early gave rise to the proverb that the Englishman italianate is a devil incarnate. Moreover, they were past masters of the art of sacking, a pursuit in which the Teutonic natives generally yield the palm to the Latin. It is needless to add that they were inveterate gamblers. Light come, light go, has always been the rule among mercenaries ; and as it is not the English practice to draw a knife in a quarrel, we may reckon that they broke each other's heads pretty frequently with no great ill-will, and brought great profit to the Italian usurers, who kindly opened a bank for their special benefit.

It would be impossible, as well as, wearisome, to follow Hawkwood step by step through the whole of his life in Italy. After the first campaign against Pisa the Florentines succeeded in bribing all but eight hundred men of the company to take service with them ; and it was from his loyalty to

the Pisans that Hawkwood first made his reputation for fidelity. Readers may doubt in the sequel whether this good report was well earned, but they must remember that straightforward dealing was rare in Italy in those days. The Pope was continually forming leagues to expel the adventurers from the country, but the leagues could never be held together. Occasionally the different bands met and quarrelled among themselves ; and Hawkwood himself suffered a severe defeat from attempting with inferior numbers to punish the deserters from Pisa. But defeats were of small importance to such a man, for the company was easily recruited up to its former strength. Florence finally bought immunity from injury by agreeing to pay him six thousand florins annually for five years, the first of many similar transactions between the two parties.

In 1368 Italy made a great effort to shake off the yoke of the Visconti. A great league was formed of the Pope, the Emperor, the King of Hungary, the Queen of Naples, and the lords of Mantua, Padua, and Ferrara. Against this coalition the Visconti took Hawkwood into their pay, who at once entered the territory of Mantua with fire and sword, and when the Emperor moved down towards him quietly broke the dykes of the Adige and flooded him out of the country. For this Englishman was a man of many wiles, who could make a handful of trumpets and drums personate an army on occasion, and always contrived to obtain accurate information as to his enemy. Next year his luck changed, and he was defeated and taken prisoner ; but he was no sooner ransomed than he was in the field again, this time against the Florentines, whom he defeated by the time-honoured stratagem of a feigned retreat and an ambush.

After some further service with the

Visconti he suddenly quarrelled with them, for what reason is unknown, and in 1372 passed straight into the pay of the Pope. He had been excommunicated times without number on previous occasions, but a couple of brilliant victories sufficed to reconcile him to the Church and to obtain from Gregory the assurance that he was a "most amiable person," and the man nearest his heart. Evidently there was a comical side to the adventurer's life, which we must hope that Hawkwood had the humour to enjoy. But an adventurer cannot live without pay, and Gregory was more profuse in compliments than in cash. The result was that the papal orders for the next campaign were not obeyed, and that Hawkwood began to cast about for more profitable employment. Gregory entreated him to organize a crusade, and St. Catherine of Siena wrote him a letter to the same end; but so old a bird was not to be caught, and presently the general rebellion of all the papal towns gave him the opportunity that he needed. He, the most formidable man in Italy, though nominally still in the Pope's pay, was at liberty to do what he would and dictate his own terms. He moved straight upon Tuscany, and the great cities in terror opened their purses and asked how much he would take to spare them. He took a hundred thousand pounds, a gigantic sum at that time, and then rejoining the Pope for a heavy price indemnified himself for his arrears by the sack of Faenza. Bologna only saved herself from a similar fate by securing his two little sons and holding them as hostages. This was the greatest of his achievements in the province of extortion.

We must pass over the next three years which Hawkwood spent partly in the papal service and partly in retirement in his own castle of Cotignola, and come to the year 1376 when he

finally turned against the Church and took service with Florence, the city wherein his fame is chiefly remembered. He made the most exorbitant terms, but he could afford to do so, inasmuch as Pisa also was bidding for his services; and finally he was not only engaged, but was appointed commander-in-chief of the forces of the anti-papal league, while to attach him still closer to the cause Bernabo Visconti, who was at its head, gave him his natural daughter to wife. The connection thus opened with Florence lasted to the end of his life, the two parties developing an ever increasing sentiment of regard for each other. The Florentines trusted implicitly that he would hold by his written engagements, and they were never deceived. As such contracts, except for immunity from plunder, seldom were made for more than six months, there was not perhaps so much difficulty in keeping to them; but Hawkwood went beyond his contract to benefit Florence, and the city never forgot it. Hence he was repeatedly elected Captain-General, and favoured by exemption from taxes and other compliments, over and above direct payment for his services.

A final furious rupture with the Visconti in 1379 made Hawkwood a bitter foe of the family until the day of his death; otherwise there is little that we need dwell on until we come to one of his most famous actions. A quarrel had broken out between the Carraras, lords of Padua, and the La Scalas, lords of Verona, each of whom hastened to engage mercenaries to fight for him. Hawkwood accepted service with the Carraras, and with an army of seven thousand five hundred horse and one thousand foot, boldly crossed the Adige and advanced into Veronese territory. The Veronese army, which numbered in all close on twelve thousand men, thereupon made a wide

détour, and hastening down the right bank of the Adige cut off Hawkwood's communication with Padua. All supplies being thus intercepted the Paduan army suffered terribly from hunger, and was forced to retreat. For more than forty days Hawkwood managed by hook or by crook to keep his men together. The stories of the time attribute to him actual miracles, and certainly he must have shown superhuman energy and resource to bring his army back as he did to the Adige. But once arrived at the bridge over the river, which led them from starvation to plenty, the army broke up. Half of it only remained with Hawkwood, the rest fled headlong over the bridge to Castelbaldo intent upon nothing but food. The Veronese army, of more than four times its strength, was close at hand, and the situation was as critical as a general's could be. Hawkwood chose the strongest position that he could find, entrenched it as well as he could, and lay on his arms for the night, sending, meanwhile, officers across the river to collect the fugitives and bring in supplies, a duty which was most energetically fulfilled.

Most men would have made all haste to put the river between themselves and the enemy, but Hawkwood knew better. Next morning he carefully reconnoitred the ground, and having made choice of his position, ordered his men first to eat and drink, and then to fall in. The line that he had chosen for his front lay along a deep trench or drain running from a swamp on his left to a canal on his right; his flanks rested thus on two firm points, the marsh itself and the dyke of the canal. Where the trench and the dam of the canal intersected each other, he constructed a bridge of ample width across the trench and threw up earthworks to protect the passage. He then dismounted six of his eight regiments of horse (they

varied in strength from five hundred to fifteen hundred men) and drew them up in two lines of three regiments apiece, the first resting on the trench, the second a crossbow shot in rear of it. The two mounted regiments made the third line, and the infantry proper was posted by the bridge that he had thrown over the trench on his right flank. His whole force numbered close on six thousand horse and a thousand foot.

His preparations were hardly completed when the enemy came up, with over nine thousand horse, sixteen hundred archers, sixteen thousand peasant infantry, and several pieces of artillery. They at once dismounted the whole of their cavalry, formed it in two lines, and advanced to the attack. Struggling manfully to carry the trench, they were beaten back by the battle-axes of Hawkwood's men. Most furious of all was the fighting in the centre, where stood the young son of the Lord of Padua, Francis Novello in command of his regiment, for the Veronese were bent on taking him if they could. Hawkwood begged him to retire rather than risk such a catastrophe, but he would not, though so hard pressed that Hawkwood was obliged to reinforce him. Very soon the enemy brought up their second line: the trench was filled with fascines, and the battle became more desperate than ever; but Hawkwood kept feeding the battle from his second line, and the trench was held. Finally, however, it was necessary to withdraw some of the infantry on the right flank to reinforce the centre, and then Hawkwood judged that the time was come for a counterstroke.

Handing over the command of the front to another officer he took a party of mounted men, five hundred horse and six hundred mounted

archers, under his personal direction, and bidding the infantry on the right also follow him, crossed the trench by the bridge that he had made and led them full on the enemy's left flank. "*Carne, carne* (flesh, flesh)!" he shouted, as, hurling his baton among the enemy, he drew his sword and his cavaliers pressed on after him with an irresistible shock. It came none too soon, for the enemy had called up their last reserves, and had fairly forced the trench. Dismayed by the defeat of their left wing they now gave way, and Francis Novello seized the moment to mount his regiment and charge; another regiment of the first line followed his example, and when they had broken the feeble resistance that still remained, the rest also mounted for the pursuit. Finally, the third line moved off swiftly to Legnano to cut off the retreat of a party of eight hundred Veronese who had contrived to reach their horses, and killed or captured every one. One small party of five thousand men, mostly peasant infantry, who had found a strong position among the deep drains of the marsh, still held out, but they were promptly attacked and dispersed. Then the darkness came down and the fight was over.

Never was victory more complete. The battle lasted little more than an hour. Nearly five thousand cavalry and eight hundred foot soldiers were captured, as well as a whole train of stores and artillery. Over seven hundred were killed and eight hundred wounded. And it must be remembered that this action took place a full century before the new birth of the art of war: the artistic handling of the fighting line, support and reserve, and the far-sighted preparation for the counterstroke were taught by no text books, and suggested by few, if any, previous examples; yet the most accomplished soldier of the

present day could hardly have fought his action more skilfully than Hawkwood. Not less noteworthy is the courage and confidence with which he sacrificed his communication with his base at Padua, and staked everything on the issue of a fight in which his skill alone availed to gain the victory.

After this campaign Hawkwood returned to Florence and lived for a short time in peace. The famous White Company was dispersed; but after very brief service with other captains the men drifted back to their old commander, unwilling to fight under any but him. His next expedition was to Naples, whence he was recalled by Florence to the more congenial task of taking the field against his greatest enemy, Gian Galeazzo Visconti. His total force was raised to nine thousand horse and five thousand foot, which made rendezvous at Padua in January, 1391, and after some days spent in manœuvres and sham fights, marched into Veronese territory to wrest the city from the Visconti. Little however was done till May, when Hawkwood, weary of desultory operations, crossed the Adige and struck boldly away for Milan. The campaign now resolved itself into a race for concentration. A force under the Count of Armagnac was expected from France to join Hawkwood, and the Visconti were therefore obliged to divide their army, which numbered twenty-six thousand men, to watch both divisions of their enemy. The question was which side could unite its forces first to annihilate the other in detail.

Hawkwood, always swift in his movements, pushed on across the Mincio, cut to pieces a force which tried to bar his passage of the Oglio, and finally crossing the Adda, halted to wait for Armagnac. He despatched messenger after messenger to hurry

him, but Armagnac with the self-sufficiency of eight and twenty, which presently led him to disaster and death, would not accelerate his march to oblige any one. Finally Jacopo del Verme, who commanded the army of the Visconti, seeing that there was nothing to be feared from the side of the Alps, concentrated the whole of his force against the army on the Adda; and there was Hawkwood left isolated on the far side of the river, with four difficult streams barring the line of his retreat, and a superior force waiting to cut him off.

Jacopo wrote to his master to ask "how he wished the enemy to be settled," so confident was he of success, but Hawkwood was not to be disposed of so easily. Immediately on receiving the news of Armagnac's defeat he began his retreat, re-crossed the Adda, and was in Cremonese territory, between that river and the Oglio, when Visconti's army came upon him. He thereupon halted and entrenched himself, while the enemy encamped a mile away, and tried by insult and bravado to entice him from his position. Del Verme sent him a fox in a cage in token of his derision, but Hawkwood quietly broke a bar and let the fox escape, observing that the animal was not such a fool but that he would find a way out. For four days he allowed the enemy to play their antics unharmed; but on the fifth he suddenly sallied out and fell upon them with such vigour that no fewer than fifteen hundred were killed or wounded, and twelve hundred taken prisoners. That same night he tied his banners to the tree-tops, left the trumpeters behind with orders to keep sounding the alarm until daylight, and marched quietly away, taking care to drop several of his baggage-animals on the way, that the capture of such spoil might delay the enemy's march.

Next day he reached the Oglio, and while marching up the bank to find a ford was again met by the enemy. What happened there is uncertain; all that is known is that after two days' incessant fighting, gallant old Hawkwood forced the passage of the river and continued his retreat. He must have taught the troops of the Visconti a severe lesson, for they allowed him to pass the Mincio and Adige without molestation. Moreover Armagnac was now beginning to emerge from the Alps, which made a diversion in his favour.

But the greatest danger of the retreat came after the passage of the Adige. He was encamped in the plain between the Adige, the Po, the Rovigo, and the Polesina, and in apparent safety, when Jacopo del Verme suddenly broke the embankments of the Adige (those rivers, it must be remembered, like most rivers that rise from glaciers, raise their beds above the level of the plain), and turned the whole of its waters upon the army. It was night, and the whole camp was at rest, when it was awakened by the sound of the rising flood, to find the plain turned into a vast lake. The situation was one which would try the best general and the best troops in the world to the utmost, but Hawkwood was equal to it. So unbounded was the confidence of his men in him that there was no panic. He quietly ordered the cavalry to mount and to take up the infantry behind them; and then putting himself at their head he made shift, by his knowledge of the ground and such guidance as was given by the tops of trees above the water, to lead them out of the inundation. All that day and part of the next night the unhappy men splashed on, the water never lower than their horses' bellies, now plunging deep into some canal whose banks were hidden by the inundation, now sticking fast

in some treacherous swamp. One can hardly conceive of a more terrible march than this through that icy water. From time to time men and horses dropped down and sank out of sight; but the mass kept moving on with the indomitable veteran at their head, and at length struck the Adige below the rupture, crossed the dry shingly bed, and were in safety once more.

At Padua Hawkwood was gladly entertained by his old pupil Francis Novello, but the total defeat of Armagnac and the facilities thus afforded to the Visconti of carrying the war into Tuscany, forced him to retire by rapid marches across the Apennines for the protection of Florence. There, after weeks of skilful manœuvring and one brilliant victory, the campaign was finally brought to an end by a general peace, and Hawkwood finally retired into private life at Florence.

There all was done for him that a grateful city could do. The Florentines, when they heard of his straits north of the Po, had given up their army for lost; and yet it had returned to them, weakened indeed, but still strong and efficient, after a retreat which for skill, courage and resolution must be reckoned among the most memorable in history. And this it owed to an old man past seventy, an adventurer who, if he had followed the example of most of his kind, would have cared for nothing but to save his own skin and left his army to its fate. The city had already voted him rewards

during the campaign; it now gave him a handsome pension for his life, to be continued to his widow after his death, provided dowries for his daughters, and set about erecting a monument to contain his ashes when his end should come. He appears, however, to have been constantly in pecuniary difficulties, from which Florence with inexhaustible generosity as constantly delivered him.

At last, in 1394, the heart of the old man grew sick for home. He asked that his pension might be commuted to a lump sum, and within five days after the application he was dead. Florence mourned him with a great public funeral, and raised to him the monument which is still to be seen in the Duomo. But Richard the Second, to his honour, claimed the ashes of so great a soldier for England, and Florence with great courtesy consented to part with them. So at last Hawkwood went home; and his body was buried under the gray skies of England, whose memory not forty years of sunny Italy could banish from the rough old warrior's heart.

In England he survives as little but a name; but in Florence the inscription may still be read on his monument: *JOANNES ACUTUS EQUES BRITANNICUS DUX ÆTATIS SUE CAUTISSIMUS ET REI MILITARIS PERITISSIMUS HABITUS EST.* The most skilful general of his age! There are but two Englishmen to whom this title has been universally conceded, John Churchill and John Hawkwood.